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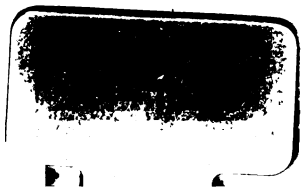

THE

ARGONAUTICS

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS,

TRANSLATED INTO

ENGLISH VERSE.

WITH

NOTES

CRITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND EXPLANATORY,

AND

DISSERTATIONS.

BY

WILLIAM PRESTON, ESQ. M.R.I.A.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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TRANSLATIONS, DISSERTATIONS,

&c. &c.

BY

WILLIAM PRESTON, ESQ. M.R.I.A.

ACCOUNT

OF THE

ARGONAUTIC EXPEDITION,

EXTRACTED FROM THE

FIRST BOOK OF THE BIBLIOTHECA

OF

APOLLODORUS THE ATHENIAN.

Jason, the son of *Æson*, the son of *Cretheus*, and *Polymedè*, the daughter of *Autolycus*, lived in *Iolcus*. *Peleus* had succeeded to the sovereignty of *Iolcus*, on the demise of *Cretheus*. This prince had a curiosity, to consult the oracle of *Apollo*, respecting the person who should succeed him in his government. On this occasion, he was cautioned by the god, to beware of a person, who should appear with only one sandal. At first, this oracle appeared wholly inexplicable. Accident furnished the exposition. As *Pelias* was offering up a sacrifice to *Neptune*, on the sea-shore, to which festival he had summoned many of the people of *Iolcus*, and *Jason* among the rest, the youth, who happened to be engaged in some rural occupation, deserted his employment, and hastened to join in the religious rites. As he was crossing the river *Anaurus*, in his haste, he happened to lose one of his sandals in the stream. Unwilling to offend *Pelias*, by seeming to slight his invitation, he hurried onward as he was. The sight of *Jason*, approaching with only one sandal, recalled the prediction to the jealous mind of *Pelias*.——He immediately

asked *Jason* "how he would act, supposing he were "invested with the sovereign power, and that it were "predicted, that one of the citizens should be the "author of his death."——*Jason*, whether it were through chance, or through some divine overruling influence, arising from the wrath of *Juno*, and working to render *Medea* the instrument of her vengeance on him, who had neglected her worship, readily answered —"I would command him to go and seek the golden "fleece."—*Jason* had no sooner spoken, than *Pelias*, taking advantage of this answer, ordered him to set out immediately, in quest of the golden fleece.

This famous golden fleece was preserved with care, in the country of the *Colchi*, suspended from the branches of a great oak, in a grove consecrated to *Mars*, where it was guarded, by a dragon, who never slept.—*Jason* having been thus commanded, to embark on this dangerous expedition, invited *Argus*, the son of *Phrykus*,* to accompany him. He, by the instructions of *Minerva*, built a vessel of fifty oars, which was called, after the name of this naval architect, *Argo*. In the prow of this vessel, *Minerva* fitted a piece of timber, endowed with the miraculous power of speech, and taken from a tree, in the celebrated grove of *Dodona*. The ship being completed, *Jason* consulted the oracle, respecting his future conduct. *Phœbus* encouraged him, to proceed on the voyage, when he should have assembled round him, all the choice and prime of *Greece*.

The names of the heroes were, *Tiphys*, the son of *Hagnias*, on whom the *Argonauts* bestowed the charge of steering the vessel. *Orpheus*, the son of *Æagrus*. *Zetes* and *Calais*, the sons of *Boreas*. *Castor* and *Pollux*, the sons of *Jupiter*. *Telamon* and *Peleus*, the sons

* Here the author differs from *Apollonius Rhodius*.

of

of *Æacus*. *Hercules*, the son of *Jove*. *Theseus*, the son of *Ægeus*. *Idas* and *Lynceus*, the sons of *Astareus*. *Amphiaraus*, the son of *Oicles*. *Coronus*, the son of *Ceneus*. *Palæmon*, the son of *Vulcan* or *Ætolus*. *Cepheus*, the son of *Aleas*. *Laertes*, the son of *Arcesius*. *Autolycus*, the son of *Hermes*. *Atalanta*, the daughter of *Schæneus*. *Menætius*, the son of *Actor*. *Actor*, the son of *Hippasus*. *Admetus*, the son of *Pheres*. *Acastus*, the son of *Pelias*. *Eurytus*, the son of *Hermes*. *Meleager*, the son of *Æneus*. *Ancæus*, the son of *Lycurgus*. *Euphemus*, the son of *Neptune*. *Pæas*, the son of *Thamacus*. *Butes*, the son of *Teleon*. *Phanus*, and *Staphylus*, the sons of *Bacchus*. *Peryclymenus*, the son of *Neleus*. *Augeas*, the son of *Phœbus*. *Iphiclus*, the son of *Thestius*. *Argus*, the son of *Phryxus*. *Euryalus*, the son of *Mecisteus*. *Penelens*, the son of *Hippalmus*. *Leitus*, the son of *Alector*. *Iritus*, the son of *Naubolus*. *Ascalaphus*, and *Almenus*, sons of *Mars*. *Asterius*, the son of *Cometes*. *Polyphemus*, the son of *Elatus*. All these, under the command of *Jason*, arrived at *Lemnos*.

The island of *Lemnos*, at the time it was visited by the *Argonauts*, was deprived of all the male inhabitants, and governed by *Hypsipile*, the daughter of *Thoas*. The reason of its being in that state, was, as follows. The women of *Lemnos*, having neglected the worship of *Venus*, the goddess, in revenge, afflicted them, by causing a most abominable odour to proceed from their persons, which rendered them so disgusting to their husbands, that, with one consent, they expelled their wives, and substituted in their room captives, brought from the neighbouring continent of *Thrace*. These unhappy women, filled with despair, conspired to destroy not only their husbands, but even their fathers and their brothers. Thus, each of these domestic furies, destroyed her own near relatives. *Thoas* alone was preserved, by

the

the piety of his daughter, who concealed him. The *Argonauts*, on their arrival at *Lemnos*, were admitted by the women of the country to their embraces; and *Hypsipile* bore to *Jason* two sons, *Evenus* and *Nebrophonus*.

From *Lemnos* the *Argonauts* proceeded to the country of the *Doliones*, over whom *Cyzicus* at that time reigned. This prince received the adventurers, with much kindness. The *Argonauts* set sail, by night, from this hospitable region, but, being driven back, by the violence of storms, they returned so unexpectedly, that their late hosts, and new friends, mistaking them for the *Pelasgi*, their neighbours, with whom they were perpetually at war, hastened to attack them in the darkness of the night. A desperate combat ensued, before either party could clear up the mistake. The *Argonauts*, after a great slaughter of their opponents, in which *Cyzicus*, their leader, was included, were apprized of the fatal error, by the approach of light. They mourned over *Cyzicus*, with sincere affliction. Having raised a magnificent tomb for this unhappy prince, on which they deposited their locks, as an oblation to the deceased; they proceeded on their voyage to *Mysia*.

Here the *Argonauts* left behind them *Hercules* and *Polyphemus*.——Their comrades were deprived of their assistance by this fatality:—*Hylas*, the son of *Thiodamas*, who was beloved by *Hercules*, having gone to a spring for water, the nymphs, struck with his uncommon beauty, carried him off. *Polyphemus*, who happened to hear the cries of the youth, drawing his sword, went in pursuit of him, supposing, that he might have been carried off by pirates; and meeting *Hercules*, he told him what had happened. *Hercules* was induced, by this intelligence, to join in the search. While the

two

two heroes were thus engaged; the vessel sailed away. *Polyphemus* soon after founded the city of *Cius;* where he established himself in a sovereignty; but *Hercules* returned to *Argos.*——*Herodotus* asserts, that *Hercules* did not sail with the *Argonauts*, but was held in servitude, by *Omphale*, queen of *Lydia.*—*Pherecydes* relates, that he was left behind in *Aphetæ*, a city of *Thessaly*, because the ship *Argo*, which, we must recollect, was endowed with speech, declared she was unable to bear his weight.—But *Demaretes* insists, that he sailed with the *Argonauts* to *Colchos;* for *Dionysius* enumerates him among the leaders in this adventure.

From *Mysia*, the band of heroes proceeded to the country of the *Bebrycians;* where *Amycus*, the son of *Neptune* and *Bithynis*, reigned. This *Amycus*, conscious of superior strength, used to compel all strangers, on their arrival in his country, to contend with him at the cestus; and having vanquished them, which was uniformly the case, he never failed to destroy them. On the arrival of the *Argonauts*, he hastened to the shore, and challenged the most brave and powerful of their crew, to the accustomed trial of skill and strength. *Pollux* undertook the combat, and killed his antagonist, by a stroke on the elbow. The *Bebrycians*, to revenge his death, made a sudden attack on the *Argonauts;* but were either killed, or put to flight, by them.

From thence the adventurers proceeded to *Salmydessus*, a city of *Thrace*, where the unfortunate *Phineus* resided, in darkness and misery. He is asserted by some, to have been the son of *Agenor*, by others, to have been the son of *Neptune.*—The cause of his being deprived of sight seems to be doubtful. Some accounts say, that this punishment was inflicted on him, for his having revealed more of futurity to men, than was pleasing to the gods. Others, that he was treated in this manner,

manner, by *Boreas* and the *Argonauts*, because, at the instigation of their stepmother, he had put out the eyes of his own sons. Nor are there wanting some, who attribute this severity to *Neptune*, because *Phineus* had instructed the sons of *Phryxus*, in the course of navigation from *Colchos* to *Greece*. To add to the sufferings, from the loss of sight, of the wretched *Phineus*, the harpies were sent by the gods, to torment him. These tormentors were winged; and, as often as they saw the table spread, and the refreshments prepared, for this unfortunate man, they used to rush down, and snatch and bear away the greater part of the viands. The small portion that remained, was defiled, and rendered so nauseous, by the intolerable stench that remained, from the contact of these monsters, that no person could endure to touch it.

The *Argonauts* being desirous to learn various circumstances, respecting their future navigation, *Phineus* profest himself willing to instruct them, in these particulars, provided they would engage, in return, to deliver him from the persecution of the harpies. To this they agreed; and having laid out the table, with a repast, as if it were intended for *Phineus*, the harpies suddenly flying down, with horrid outcries, fell on the viands, and snatched, and tore away every thing: the winged youths, *Calais* and *Zetes*, the sons of *Boreas*, beholding this, drew their falchions, and pursued the harpies through the air. The monsters must of necessity have perished, by the hands of their pursuers, and the winged brothers also had the prospect of perishing, by fatigue, and the intolerable length of the pursuit; but one of the harpies fell down, into the river *Tigres*, in *Peloponnesus*, which from her obtained the name of *Harpys*.—Some writers give to this harpy the name of *Nicothoe*; others, that of *Aellopus*. It does not seem to be decided,

cided, what was the name of the other harpy, whether *Ocypetè*, *Ocythoé*, or, as *Hesiod* calls her, *Ocypodè*. This latter harpy, flying through the *Propontis*, arrived at the islands of the *Echinades;* which from her obtained the name of *Strophades*, for having arrived at them, she there turned her course. Having arrived at the shore, she fell down through fatigue, together with her pursuer. But *Apollonius*, in his *Argonautics*, relates, that the sons of *Boreas* continued their pursuit of the harpies, to the *Strophades;* and that the monsters sustained no injury, because they bound themselves by an oath, to refrain from any further injury to *Phineus*.

Phineus, being thus delivered from the annoyance of the harpies, pointed out, and described to the *Argonauts*, the course of their future voyage. In particular, he warned them of the danger they must incur, in passing the *Symplegades*.—These were rocks, of very great size, and unfixed in the sea, which being agitated by the winds, clashed together, and, encountering each other, impeded the passage through the deep. Besides this, an immense mist and darkness arose from them, with a tremendous sound, so that no bird could fly over them. *Phineus* advised the adventurers, to send a dove before them, through the *Symplegades;* apprizing them, that if they saw the dove pass through in safety, they might then urge on their vessel through the strait, without hesitation; but if, on the contrary, they should see the dove destroyed, that then they ought not to attempt a passage.

Fortified by the instructions of *Phineus*, the *Argonauts* set sail; and arrived at the *Symplegades*. On their approaching them, they let fly the dove, from the prow of the ship. The bird pursued her flight, with great rapidity, as the rocks were approaching to clash together. She past safely through, with the loss of some

Jason, thus forewarned, and taught by *Medea*, and fortified, by the application of the medicament, pierced into the thickest recess of a grove, surrounding a temple; and sought for the bulls. These monsters rushed forth, in a furious manner, driving volumes of fire and smoke from their mouths and nostrils. But *Jason* seized, and yoked them to the plough. Having proceeded to sow the dragon's teeth; he perceived armed men to spring up from the ground. As soon as he found them assembling, in considerable numbers; he secretly threw large stones, where he saw the thickest crouds were gathered. Intestine discord was thus excited among them; and while they were fiercely engaged, in combat with each other; *Jason* attacked them, and completed their destruction. Thus, having subdued the bulls; and sown the dragon's teeth; it seemed, that nothing remained to be done; but that *Æetes*, according to the terms of his stipulation, should yield up the golden fleece. But, this fierce prince, far from performing his compact, conceived the design of burning the vessel of the *Argonauts*; and putting to death all her crew.

Medea, discovering the intentions of her father, hastened to anticipate him. And proceeding to a place, where she met *Jason* by night, she led him, without delay, to the part of the sacred grove, where the fleece was preserved. She lulled to rest, by the power of drugs, and charms, the watchful dragon, who guarded it; and having thus possessed herself of the prize, embarked with *Jason*, on board his vessel, accompanied by *Absyrtus* her brother, whom she had persuaded to become a partner of her flight from their father.*

* Here again the author differs from *Apollonius*.

Æetes,

Æetes, perceiving what *Medea* had done, hastened to pursue the *Argonauts*. That princess, being apprized of the near approach of her enraged father, killed her brother *Absyrtus*; and cut his limbs into small pieces, which she scattered on the face of the deep. *Æetes* waited to collect the dispersed remains of his murdered child; and was thus induced to remit the pursuit. Having, therefore, turned back, and interred the mangled limbs of his son, he called the name of that place *Tomi*.* *Æetes* then sent a numerous body of *Colchians*, in pursuit of *Medea*; and threatened, that if they failed to bring her back, they should undergo the punishment, which he destined for his daughter. These *Colchians* disperst themselves, into various quarters, to pursue their search after the *Argonauts*, who had already past the river *Eridanus*.

The anger of *Jupiter* being excited, against the *Argonauts*, by the cruel murder of *Absyrtus*; he raised a storm, which drove them out of their course. As they were passing the islands called *Absyrtides*, the ship *Argo* addrest them, with a human voice, in these words.—"THE WRATH OF JOVE SHALL NEVER CEASE, UNTIL, HAVING PROCEEDED TO AUSONIA, YE ARE

Æetes hastened to pursue.] In this passage the author differs from *Apollonius*, whom he generally follows. That poet does not represent *Æetes*, as pursuing the *Colchians*, nor does he represent *Medea* as cutting the body of *Absyrtus* in pieces.——*Apollodorus*, in this part of his story, follows *Pherecydes*; as may be collected from the scholiast of *Apollonius*, v. 228.—See *Heyne*, not. 208. in *Apollod.*

* From a *Greek* word, which signifies to cut or divide.

"PURIFIED

"PURIFIED BY CIRCE, FROM THE BLOOD OF AB-
"SYRTUS."

Having past the boundaries of *Libya* and *Gaul*, the *Argonauts* were wafted through the *Sardinian* sea; and coasted along the shores of *Etruria*. From thence they proceeded to the island of *Æa*, where expiatory rites were performed for them by *Circè*. As the adventurers sailed past the abode of the *Sirens*, *Orpheus*, who was aware of their allurements, preserved his companions from the danger, by a strain of melody, in opposition to their songs. *Butes* alone of the number leaped overboard; and began to swim towards the rocks, where these enchantresses were stationed. *Venus*, touched with compassion, rescued him from the waves, and conveyed him safely to *Lilybæum*.

After their escape from the *Sirens*, the *Argonauts* encountered new dangers; from *Scylla* and *Charybdis*; and the wandering rocks,* from whence a prodigious body of flame and smoke appeared to be vomited forth. *Thetis* and her nymphs, by the direction of *Juno*, conducted the vessel safely through this perilous strait. And having past *Sicily*, where the herds and flocks of the sun grazed, the adventurers arrived at *Corcyra*, the island of the *Pheacians*, which at that time was governed by *Alcinous*.

As to the *Colchians*, whom we mentioned above, they, finding themselves unable to overtake the *Argonauts*, some of them settled in the mountains of the *Pheacians*. Others, pursuing their voyage onward, colonized the islands, named after *Absyrtus*, the *Absyrtides*.—A third party of them proceeded to *Corcyra*, and, finding the ship *Argo* there, demanded *Medea*, from King *Alcinous*.

* Called *Plancta*.

—The

—The monarch answered, that, if the princess was already married to *Jason*, he would not surrender her to them; but that, if she yet remained single, he would send her back to her father.—*Aretè*, the wife of *Alcinous*, discovering the determination of her husband, hastened to anticipate his purpose, by causing *Jason* and *Medea* to solemnize their nuptials.—The *Colchians*, fearing to return without their errand, obtained leave from *Alcinous*, to settle in *Corcyra*.

The *Argonauts*, departing from this hospitable island, with *Medea*, encountered a violent storm, in the gloom of night. While they were in the utmost distress, *Apollo* standing on the *Melantian* rocks, darted his lightnings, like arrows, on the deep, to assist the *Greeks* in finding their way. They perceive an island near—they approach it—they enter a safe harbour, when there were the least hopes of finding one.——To this island they gave the name of *Anaphè*;* and raised an altar there to *Apollo Ægletes*.—Names which were both of them derived from the incident of their preservation.

Here, after the *Argonauts* had performed their sacrifices, in due form, they refreshed themselves. On this occasion, the twelve *Phæacian* virgins, whom *Aretè* had given to *Medea*, for her attendants on the voyage, began to mock the young *Argonauts*. The youths replied, in the same strain of levity; and hence arose an ancient custom, of introducing a certain war of wit—set matches of jest and derision, which became an established part of the rites appropriated to particular festivals.

The *Argonauts*, having sailed from this place, reached *Crete*. Where they were, at first, prevented from landing, by *Talos*. Some writers say, that this personage

* From the *Greek*, *anaphaino*, to show, because *Apollo* showed it to them; and *Ægletes*, from *aglè*, brightness.

was

was sprung from the race of men, who lived in the brazen age.—Others, that he was formed by the god *Vulcan*, and by him given to *Minos*. The substance of this extraordinary man was of brass. And some have asserted, that his true name was *Taurus*. He had but one vein, which extended from his neck to his heel, where it was covered over, by a skin or filament, in which was an orifice, closed, as tradition reports, by a pin or nail. This *Talus* protected the island, running all round it, thrice a day. When this vigilant guard perceived the vessel of the *Argonauts* sailing past, he immediately attacked it, with huge stones. Here, again, the artifice and magic arts of *Medea* came to the relief of the adventurers; and extricated them from their perplexity.

It is related by some, that *Talus*, having been driven to madness, by the envenomed potions, administered to him by *Medea*, died, in that manner.——Others say, that being imposed on, by her promises of making him immortal, he suffered her to draw out the brazen pin, that closed his vein, by which means, all the ichor of his body flowed out, and he died.—Others ascribe his death to a wound in the heel, inflicted by the arrow of *Poas*.

The *Argonauts*, having rested themselves one night at *Crete*, proceeded thence, to *Ægina*; where they touched, to take in water. Here a sportive contention arose, among the crew; while they emulated each other, in performing this service, with dispatch; and ran with their burdens of water to the shore. Having past by *Eubœa* and *Locris*, these bold adventurers entered the harbour of *Iolcus*; where they anchored, and their expedition closed; at the interval of four months, from its commencement.

During

During this time, *Pelias*, having no apprehension of the return of the *Argonauts*, began to think of putting *Æson* to death. The old man, finding it was vain to contend, requested, and obtained from the tyrant the melancholy privilege, of putting an end to his own existence. Having sacrificed a bull, he drank his blood, and courageously ended his days in that manner. The mother of *Jason* loaded *Pelias* with execrations; and, leaving her little son, as the destined leader of a future warfare, against the persecutor of her family, hanged herself. *Pelias* put the child also to death; and thought himself secured against all danger from the family. When, behold *Jason* returned, in triumph, with the golden fleece. He presented this precious acquisition to *Pelias;* and waited for a proper opportunity, of revenging the injuries he and his family had suffered.

Meantime, taking with him a number of the most distinguished heroes, *Jason* sailed to the isthmus of *Corinth;* where he consecrated the ship *Argo*, to *Neptune*. After this, he consulted with *Medea*, on the most effectual means of punishing *Pelias*, for his cruel conduct. The *Colchian* princess accomplished their revenge, in the following manner.—She contrived to gain admission into the palace of *Pelias;* and having insinuated herself into the confidence of his daughters, *Asteropæa* and *Antinoè;* she persuaded them, to cut up and boil their father, promising to renew his youth, with her medicaments. These young women, reposing a confidence in her professions, killed and dissected their aged father.

Acastus, the son of *Pelias*, and the people of *Iolcus*, buried the murdered prince; and expelled *Medea* and *Jason* from that district. They emigrated to *Corinth;* where they past ten entire years, in unabated prosperity. At the end of that period; *Creon*, king of *Corinth*, having betrothed his daughter *Glaucè* to *Jason*, he expelled

pelled *Medea*, and espoused the young princess. *Medea*, furious at this treatment; called to witness all the gods, who were conusant of the vows, which *Jason* had sworn. She uttered the bitterest reproaches against his ingratitude and perjury; and sent an envenomed robe, as a present to his bride; which she had no sooner put on, than she and her father, who stood near her, were consumed in a devouring flame. *Medea* then killed the children, *Mermerus* and *Pheres*, which she had borne to *Jason*; and, having obtained from *Phebus*, a chariot drawn by fiery dragons, she mounted it; and fled to *Athens*.—In this flight, as some relate, she left her infant children, as suppliants, at the altar of *Juno Aerea*; but the *Corinthians* dragged them from this asylum; and killed them, with reiterated wounds.

Medea, having escaped to *Athens*, espoused *Ægeus*; and produced a son by him, who was called *Medon*; but, having insidiously endeavoured to destroy *Theseus*, the son of *Ægeus*, by a former marriage, she was banished from *Athens* with her child. *Medon*, her son, having, in process of time, obtained extensive sway, among the barbarous people of *Asia*; the kingdom of *Media* was called after his name.—He, having engaged in a war against the people of *Madia*, perished in the undertaking.——*Medea* returned privately to *Colchos*; where she found her father *Æetes* expelled from the throne, by the treacherous practices of his brother, *Perseus*; and restored him to the possession of his crown.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK OF THE BIBLIOTHECA OF APOLLODORUS.

NAMES OF ARGONAUTS,

MENTIONED BY APOLLODORUS THE ATHENIAN,

AND NOT TO BE FOUND IN APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

Actor,
Amphiaraus,
Æsculapius,
Atalanta,
Autolycus,
Euryalus,
Ialmenus,
Iritus,
Laertes,
Leitus,
Peneleus,
Phanus,
Pæas,
Staphylus,
Theseus.

In making *Atalanta* and *Theseus*, two of the companions of *Jason*, he differs expressly from *Apollonius*; who says, that *Jason* declined taking *Atalanta* with him, though she desired to go, lest her beauty should excite disorder among the adventurers. And that *Theseus* was actually a prisoner, in the infernal regions, at the time of the enterprize.

CATALOGUE OF THE ARGONAUTS,

ACCORDING TO APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

Those, whose names are marked with an Asterisk, are not mentioned by *Apollodorus*.

Acastus,
Admetus,
* *Æthalides*,
* *Amphion*,
* *Amphidamas*,
Areius,
Ancæus,
* A second *Ancæus*,
Argus,

Argus,
Asterius,
**Asterion*,
Augeas,
Butes,
Calais,
Canthus,
Castor,
Cepheus,
**Clytius*,
Coronus,
**Echion*,
Erginus,
Eribotes,
Euphemus,
**Eurydamas*,
Eurytion,
Eurytus,
Hercules,
Jason,
Idas,
**Idmon*,
Iphiclus,
*A second *Iphiclus*,
**Iphitus*,
*A second *Iphitus*,
**Laocoon*,
**Leodocus*,
**Lynceus*,
Meleager,
Menetius,
**Mopsus*,
**Nauplius*,
**Oileus*,
Orpheus,
Palæmonius,
Peleus,
Periclymenus,
Phâlerus,
Phlias,
Pollux,
Polyphemus,
Talaus,
Telamon,
Tiphys,
Zetes.

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

OF PART OF THE

ARGONAUTICS OF ORPHEUS.

THE account of *Orpheus*, or whoever was the ancient poet, whether *Onomacritus*, or any other, who composed the account of the *Argonautic* expedition, which has reached us, and is certainly of very remote antiquity, and borrowed in great measure from the *Orphic* fables and traditions, differs, in many circumstances, from the narrative of *Apollonius*; and particularly with respect to the route, which the adventurers pursued, on their return from *Colchis* to *Greece*.—The reader will not be displeased to see this account, as it is given by the venerable author.

Arg. v. 1020.—*Æetes* suddenly heard from his servants, that *Medea* was borne away, and presently ordered *Absyrtus* to assemble the people, and go in quest of his sister. The youth, without loss of time, hastened to the banks of the river, to the vessel of the heroes; and there he found the unhappy virgin. Night, meantime, adorned with stars, had performed half her course, when the horrid fraud, the black and portentous deed, of *Medea*, was perpetrated on *Absyrtus*, at the suggestion of love.—For she, and her accomplices, killing him, cast the pieces of his mangled body towards the banks of the rapid river, which, being agitated by a powerful wind, hurried him away. The remains of the unhappy youth, were borne to the sea, and cast, at length,

length, upon certain islands, which still retain the name of *Absyrtus*.—This cruel deed did not pass unnoticed, by all-seeing *Jove* and *Nemesis*.

After the *Argonauts* had embarked on board their vessel, and cut the halsers on each side, from the banks of the river, and bending more and more on their swift oars, cut the river; we were not borne strait forward, to the fishy sea, through the mouth of the broad *Phasis*, but were borne about afar, by a wide deviation, perpetually sailing back. The cities of the *Colchians* were left behind, without the knowledge of the *Minyæ*; for a black and overshadowing night was diffused around. Thus labouring and astray, not knowing whither we went, we ran through the mid channel of the stream.—The people, who dwell around, are, the *Gymni*, the *Buonomæ*, the tribe of the *Corcetici*, and the clownish *Arcyes*, with the ferocious *Sindi*.—Here the *Argonauts* thought to pass among the habitations of the *Charandæi*, near the ridges of *Caucasus*, through the narrow pass of *Erythia*. But, when morn appeared, delighting man, with her beams, we touched at a grassy island, surrounded by two rivers, whose streams are not navigable, the expansive *Phasis*, and the smoothly flowing *Sarangis*. The lake *Mœotis* inundating the land, sends the latter, through the reedy grass and sedge, resounding to the sea. Then, plying our oars, we sailed day and night—by two outlets of the lake we arrive at the *Bosporus*—through the midst of this, *Titan*, mounted on a mighty bull, past, with the oxen which he had stolen, dividing the passage from the lake.†—Here, worn-out with the fatigue of rowing, through the weary length of day, we first arrive at the seats of the *Mœotæ*, softly-

* The *Cimmerian Bosporus*.

† The *Palus Mœotis*, now called the sea of *Zabach*.

robed

robed—the race of the *Geloni*—the countless tribes of the long-haired *Comatæ*, the *Sauromatæ*, the *Getæ*, the *Gymnæi*, the *Cecryphae*.—The ferocious and dangerous races of people, who dwell in the land around the lake *Mœotis*.—Yet still the gods set before us mighty toil and anguish—after we past, in the region of these people, the last waters of this abyss. There the water is confined with narrow banks, and inundates that savage and inhospitable land, with mighty noise—it swells, and the adjacent wood, trackless and vast, rebellows to the sound. At length, it disembogues itself in the ocean, and the boundaries of the north.—Thither the vessel past, hurried through the narrow strait. Through nine incessant nights and days our toil we ply. On either hand, we leave behind us uncounted tribes of savage men. The *Pacti*, the *Arctii*, the cruel *Lelii*, the *Scythians*, quivered all, the trusty servants of *Mars*. The *Tauri*, homicide race, who perform direful sacrifice to *Artemis*, and fill the consecrated chalice with human gore. We leave behind the *Hyperborei*, the *Nomades*, and the *Caspian* race. But when the tenth morn, enlightener of mortal man, appeared; we touched on the hollow vales between the *Riphean* hills. There, on the instant, *Argo* rushed forth, dancing and bounding over the stream, and sprang into the ocean.—The *Chronian* sea, called by men the *Hyperborean* deep, or the *Dead Sea*.—There vanished all our hopes of escaping the most dreadful doom; and too fully had our fears been realised; but *Ancæus*, relying on the polished rudder, guided the ship, that rushed with mighty force, impelled, and compelled her to seek the right-hand shore. Forward she leaped, constrained by the great exertions of the rowers. When now our arms were fatigued, by long and painful efforts at the oars, and our hands could no longer grasp them. With sinking hearts we rested on our elbows, and supported

ported our heavy heads that dropt with briny dew.—The pangs of hunger aggravated the sufferings of weariness. But *Ancæus* sprang forward, and roused and animated all the other heroes with his exhortations, addressing them in soothing terms.—Then, because of the tenacious mud, the heroes descended with well-twisted ropes, over the sides of the ship, let themselves down lightly into the sea, and two of them, *Ancæus* and *Argus*, supported us. They by ropes made fast an halser from the poop, and gave the ends of it to the grasp of the other heroes. They instantly hurried along the beach, hauled the rope with all their might, and the ship, formed to pass the seas, followed where they drew, cutting her liquid path through the waves, over the smooth pebbles of the beach.——No longer did the howling air, with blasts of roaring wind, excite the loud sea—in silence I left the deep, where the last wave of *Tethys*, and the northern bear, lies spread. When the sixth morn arose, enlightener of man, we came, with short interval, to a race rejoicing in wealth and affluence, the *Macrobians* they are called—they live for many years—twelve chiliads of months of a hundred years of the full moon, without any of the troublesome concomitants of age. But, when at last they have reached the month, appointed by fate, they sink in a sweet and tranquil slumber, and find the boundaries of life. Nor thoughts of food, nor other cares and toils, that molest the generality of men, breed in them the least solicitude. On sweet and fragrant herbs they feed, amid the verdant and grassy pastures, and drink ambrosial dew, divine potation. All resplendent alike, in coeval youth, a placid serenity for ever smiles on their brows, and lightens in their eyes, the consequence of a just temperament of mind and disposition, both in parents and in sons, perpetually disposing them to act what is

just,

just, and speak what is prudent. Through the populous region of these we past by land, and reached another shore—then, still dragging along our light-sailing vessel, we arrived at the region of the *Cimmerians*, who alone are unconscious of the splendour of the sun, that glows with flame; for the *Ripheam* mountain, and the ridge of *Calpis*, intercept from them the radiance of the orient dawn, and enormous *Phlegra* projecting, darkens the noontide air, and the peaked *Alps* extended, a ridge immense, conceal from these people the departing rays of the evening sun; and darkness for ever broods over the region inhabited by them.—Thence departing, with unwearied feet, we arrived at a bluff and pointed promontory, and a harbour defended from the winds——there *Acheron*, whose currents wash down gold, laves a gelid region, and pours along his waters, clear and bright as silver—with blackening expanse, a deep and gloomy lake receives him. Along the banks of the river resound the murmur of whispering and luxuriant trees, that night and day are loaded with perennial fruit.—— All around, *Ceres*, protectress of the fruitful earth, abundant source of food to man, fills the stately walls, and well-built streets, with plenteousness—within those mansions abide a race of men, of transcendent integrity and justice. One bark suffices to waft them, when life is past—for instantly the parted shades are transferred, from that pleasant arm of the sea, to *Acheron*.——For near them are set the dwelling and eternal gates of *Hades*; and near them the shadowy tribes, the realm of phantoms.

This city too we past, and these tribes of people; still pressing forward, to fulfil our woful and calamitous destiny. Then *Anceus* advanced from the ships and instantly directed all his companions, weary as they were,

to embark in a throng. And thus he addrest them, in mild and soothing words.

"Endure, my friends, this labour also; for after this "I trust, ye will not encounter any more severe. I "feel the eastern wind blow strong, and curl the sur- "face of the deep.—I find an indication of the rising "wind, in the roaring of the waves over the sand; they "never roar in vain. Quickly, then, upraise the mast, "unfurl your sails, expand them from the shrouds, and "trim your vessel for the voyage."

The crew exerted themselves to execute his orders. Then sudden, from the hollow womb of the vessel, was heard a tremendous voice. In thundering human tone the prophetic beech resounded, which *Pallas* had included within the timbers of the ship.—Thus it spoke, and consternation came on the spirits of all.——"Oh, "wretched I!—better had I perished in the *Euxine* "waves, dashed to pieces, and scattered on the surface "of the deep, by the *Cyanean* rocks.——I should not, "degraded and obscure, have borne reproach and "shame, through the ignorance of kings.—For now "the fury, vengeful of kindred blood, follows in the "rear, claiming her debt of punishment for slain *Absyr-* "*tus*—disaster on disaster presses down your heads.— "Soon as I more nearly approach the vengeful sisters, "I shall openly accuse you of the recent and deadly "crime—unless turning me, with my consecrated head "and stern, you guide me within the embayed recesses, "where land surrounds the unproductive sea. That I "may pass out over the *Atlantic* waves."

Thus having spoke, the sacred wood was mute. The souls of the *Minyæ* stood appalled.—They saw, that a direful fate impended, through the disastrous passion of *Jason*.——And much they revolved, within their secret thoughts, whether it would not be expedient to kill the ill-fated

ill-fated *Medea*, their unlucky companion, and thus avert the wrathful pursuit of the furies. This purpose they had executed; and thrown her overboard, to feed the fishes of the deep; but touched with compassion, the renowned son of *Æson* observed them instantly, and frustrated their design; and with supplications interposed, to prevent its completion; and with entreaties appeased the mind of each of his companions.

After they had thus heard the prophetic voice of *Argo*; the heroes, without delay, sate down on the benches of rowers, and grasped their oars; and *Anceus*, with skill, managed the helm. They past the island of *Hibernia*, in their course.——With impetuous vibration and attendant darkness, the wind arose in their wake, and filled their swelling sails—the ship ran swiftly over the heaving billows—then not one of the heroes hoped any longer to escape destruction. For now the twelfth morn arose; and none of the crew could imagine or divine, within his mind, where we were. *Lynceus*, at length, discovered the bounds of the calmly flowing and tranquil ocean; for he descried, in the remote horizon, a certain island clad with pines, where are the spacious mansions of *Ceres*, queen among the gods. Around, it was enveloped, in thick clouds, and walls of mist.—Concerning the story of all these, O intelligent *Muses*, you have already heard my historic song—how her kinsmen deceived *Persephone*, cropping the tender blossoms through the vast extended mead; and afterwards, how *Pluto* having yoked to the car his sable steeds, assailed the virgin with the permission of *Jupiter*, and bore her away by force, through the unproductive waves.

Then, I refused to sail to the shore, and splendid mansions of that isle, where, never mortal had touched as yet, with adventurous prow. For it possesses not any harbour, which might receive the manageable ship. But

a steepy rock, scaling Heaven, defends on every side the sea-girt coast: within whose cincture spring the grateful gifts of bounteous *Ceres*.——*Ancæus* then, the ruler of the ship with sable prow, was not unmindful of my caution, but quickly urging back the ship, he made her to recede, by inclining the rudder to the left hand ——then, that the vessel might not rush onward, he turned the rudder towards the right.

On the third day, we arrived at the residence of *Circe*, at the *Lycean* land, stations surrounded by the sea. With anxious and sorrowful heart we touched on that shore. We bound our cables to the rocks, and *Jason* sent forward from the ship some of his chosen companions, with directions to proceed, and search what race of men inhabited that extensive region, and procure a knowledge of the habitations and manners of the people. Presently, the maid, the full sister of the magnanimous *Æetes*, *Circe*, daughter of the sun, met them, as they advanced—(*Circe*—so *Asterope* her mother, and the glorious *Hyperion* her father, call the nymph)——onward to the ship her course she bent—amazement seized the heroes, at the view—the tresses, waving from her head, were like beams of light—bright shone her beauteous countenance——a subtle flame was darted from her eyes——soon as she beheld *Medea*, through the disguise of her snowy veil (for oppress with shame and anguish, while pallid grief preyed on her heart, the maid had cast the floating drapery over her charms.)—Her *Circe* marked, and, moved with pity, addrest her in these terms.——

"Ah wretch, what fate has the *Cyprian* queen on "thee imposed!—Think not, that the recent transac-"tions, before your arrival at this, my isle, are hid "from my view—hither you come, polluted by a two-"fold crime—rebellion against the legitimate authority

"of

" of a father—and parricidal murder, stained as ye are " with the blood of a brother, butchered in the most " cruel manner.—Nor shall you, if aright I deem, ar- " rive at your native lands—if, with fatal security, you " persevere in your present career of guilt unexpiated, " and neglect to cleanse and purify yourselves by rites " of lustration.—No—hope not for prosperous return, " until you shall have averted the wrath of the deities, " by religious rites, and sacrifices of atonement, at the " shores of *Malæa*, under the direction of *Orpheus*.— " But, think not, you, in your present plight, thus im- " pious and unattoned, to pass my threshold.——The " gods forbid—stained and polluted as you are.——Ne- " vertheless, I shall send you, with prompt liberality, " the gifts that hospitality requires—bread, and racy " wine, and abundant viands, more than your wants " demand."

Thus, having spoke, she returned with wings of speed—and forthwith, in the midst of the ship, abundance of vessels were set, prepared for food and potation; and every requisite for a banquet was disposed in order.—As we prepared for our departure, a vehement wind arose—resounding shrill, it breathed to waft the heroes on their course.—Then, loosing our cables from that island, we pass over the waves—we reach the strait of *Tartessus*, and touch at the pillars of *Hercules*—we delay, during the evening, at the promontory, sacred to potent *Bacchus*; compelled by the necessity of procuring sustenance.—When morn, the harbinger of light, awoke from regions of the east, we, with her dawn, awoke to our toils, and ploughed the green surface of the salt profound.—We arrived at the *Sardinian* sea—the gulfs of the *Latins*—*Ausonian* islands and *Tyrrhenian* shores—but after we had arrived at *Lilybæum*, and the surrounding channel, we touch on *Sicily*, a triangular

gular island. There the *Ætnean* flame of *Enceladus* retarded our progress, eager as we were. Then, suddenly over the prow the dreadful waves boiled up, from the secret bottom of the abyss, with mighty noise, and reached even our highest sails.——And there the devouring whirlpool detained the ship—nor suffered it to spring forward—or, on the other hand, to glide backward. But in the hollow of that fatal vortex she was whirled round and round. And now the *Argo* was in such a state, that she must quickly have been swallowed up in the deep devouring surge, had not *Eurybia*, eldest daughter of the hoary father of the deeps, desired to behold her husband *Peleus*, gently emerging from the sea. She snatched from destruction the vessel of the *Argonauts*, and saved it from being sunk beneath the billows.

Then, pursuing our course not far from thence, we discovered a lofty and projecting rock, and over it hangs a steep and craggy cliff, eaten into vast caverns, within which the blackening waves rebellow dreadful.—Seated there, the nymphs deceitful utter sweet and insidious sounds, and sooth the hearing of mortals, who are destined never to return.—Then, were the *Minyæ* delighted, to listen to the blandishing song of the *Sirens*. And never had they sailed past that voice of pernicious sweetness.——And even now they were dropping the oars from their hands—and *Ancæus* had steered the ship directly towards the fatal promontory: had not I, taking the lyre in my hands, tried the chords, and sung the strain my mother taught, delightful ornament of minstrelsy.—I sung, and boldly smote the strings, in unison with the song.—The song was this—"How, "formerly, the deities contended, concerning the steeds "with feet of storm; and the dark-haired *Neptune*, en-"raged with father *Jove*, struck, with his golden tri-

"dent

"dent, the *Lyctenian* lands, and dissipated them over "the vast expanse of sea, where they became isles, sur- "rounded by the deep, which men denominated *Sar-* "*dinia*, *Eubœa*, and the stormy *Cyprus*."—Thus, as I struck the lyre, the *Sirens*, from the snowy summit of the rock, astonished heard. And their own song was intermitted.——One cast the flute, and one the vocal shell, from her hands; and dreadfully they groaned, for the fatal period of their destined annihilation was at hand.——Then, from the summit of the caverned and gaping rock, they precipitated themselves into the abysses of the sea, for ever toiling through its troubled billows.——There they changed into rocks their graceful forms, and transcendent charms.

When *Argo*, flying swiftly over the deep, had escaped also this mortal danger——while the winds filled her sails, and the shrouds were strained on the mast, she was wafted over the billows, and through the bays, and arrived at the divine *Córcyra*—there abode the *Phæacians*, skilled in navigation. *Alcinous*, the most just of kings, reigned over this people, and gave them laws and administered justice.——We furled our sails—we made fast our cables—we moored our ship, and prepared sacrifices to *Panomphæan Jove*, and *Epactian Apollo*.—Here, with mighty force, and an infinite number of vessels, the fleet of *Æetes* sailed up to us—with strenuous efforts they rowed along—the *Colchians*, the *Erravians*, the *Charandæans*, and the *Solymæans*, in pursuit of the *Minyæ*, that they might bring back *Medea* to the presence of her father, and make her responsible in punishment, for the crime of having murdered her brother.——But when they approached more nearly the secret recess of the deep and capacious harbour—then their heralds proceeded without delay to the palace of *Æetes*.—The knees of *Medea* were unnerved; and on her

her cheeks fear diffused its pallid hue—through apprehension, lest the *Phæacian* monarch should seise, and send her, reluctant, to the residence of her father, and a direful catastrophe should ensue.——But vindictive *Juno* conceded not the death of *Medea*—before that *Jason*, with her co-operation, had inflicted fell calamities on the house of *Pelias*, and on that king himself.—When they heard the purposes of the cruel *Colchian* king, even the beautiful *Arete*, and the god-like *Alcinous*—*Alcinous* directed the heralds to take the maid, the subject of contention, from the tall ship, and bear her to her father, that she might suffer the punishment due to her guilt.——But *Arete*, the illustrious queen, pitied her, and with soft intercession addrest her husband. And spoke to this effect.

"A reprobated task it were, my husband, to rend "the nuptial bond—to scatter to the winds the sacred "marriage bed, and extinguish the hallowed torch of "love—great is the wrath of *Dionæan Venus*, both at "men and women, who meditate such deeds.—But, if "*Medea* be yet a virgin, and has reached our shores "untouched; let her depart to her father's home, and "the tribes of the *Colchians*: but if she has exchanged "her virgin flower, for intercourse with man, and con-"jugal embrace, let her spouse conduct her with him."

She spake; and her words sunk deep in the soul of *Alcinous*. And he determined to perform every thing as she advised.—Nor was the determination hid from the *Minyæ*—for *Juno*, without delay, having assumed the form of a slave, hasted to the ship, and succinctly, in hurried tone, related what the king desired.—Then, *Medea* prepared her nuptial couch, in the stern of the vessel; while others strewed the carpets, and extended around the golden fleece. They likewise hung the hides of bulls, and their shields and armour, all around, on

spears,

spears, to conceal the mystic rites of the genial bed.—Thus were the ill-omened nuptials, of the hapless *Medea*, consummated.

When the *Colchians*, and the *Minyæ*, came to the presence of the blameless king, and respectively stated their pretensions and demands, the son of *Æson* obtained from *Alcinous* an award, that he should keep *Medea* as his wife.——This having heard, the heroes quickly loosed the cables of the ship, and, by force of rowing, *Argo*, endowed with human speech, fled quickly over the deep, and ploughed her way through the gulf of *Ambracia*.

Now, O *Museus*, offspring of a goddess, I will relate to you all that the *Minyæ* endured after this, from stormy blasts, on the shores of the *Syrtis*; and how, at length, they were rescued from their course of weary wandering over the deeps; and what adversities they endured in *Crete*; when, wafted to that shore, they beheld the form terrific of the brazen giant, who prohibited all entrance within the harbour: and how, constrained by the roaring billows, and the sudden force of blackening tempests, we expected that our swift ship should be dashed on the gloomy and formidable rocks. But the far-shooting *Pæan* was near, propitious to our call—he heard us—he sent a shaft from craggy *Delos*—he revealed himself from the midst of the *Sporades*.—Hence, that island has been called *Cranae*, by all the men, who inhabit the circumjacent regions.—But it was not allowed wholly to prohibit the son of *Æson*, from navigating the deep, for he bore with him the price of his ransom.——Pernicious fate recoiled from her attempt; for grievous was the wrath of *Hyperion*.—Soon as by force of rowing the *Minyæ* gained the promontory of *Malea*—then, by the suggestions of *Circè*, they proceeded to deliver themselves from the curses of *Æetes*,

and the persuing fury exacting punishment for sin.—Then, I performed, on behalf of the *Minyæ*, the rites that expiate sin, and supplicated *Neptune*, whose trident shakes the earth, that he might grant a safe return, and the sight of our beloved native home, to the toil-worn train, and bless them in the embraces of their fond parents.

Again the *Argonauts* set their sails, and directed their course to the well-built *Iolcos*.—But I returned to the shady *Tenarus*, that I might perform sacrifices to the great and awful rulers, who preside over the shades, and hold the keys of the infernal prison house. Passing from thence, I directed my rapid course to snowy *Thrace*—to the region of *Libethrians*, my native land—and entered the far-famed cave, where the muse my mother bore me to the divine *Æagrus*.

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* So *Virgil*—*Libethrides* noster amor.

ESSAY THE FIRST.

SOME

ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF THE

POET APOLLONIUS.

Apollonius, surnamed the *Rhodian*, from the place of his occasional residence, or, perhaps, so called after his mother, was a native of *Alexandria*, the son of *Silleus*, or *Illeus*, and *Rhoda*, of the tribe of *Ptolemais*. The genius of this fine poet was originally formed, by the precepts and example of *Callimachus*, who superintended his youthful studies. It will be seen, in the progress of this essay, that this early and amicable connexion, of the two great poets, degenerated, but, from what cause is not fully ascertained, into open hostility.

Our author was one, of that constellation of talent, which illuminated the polite and learned court of *Alexandria*, and consisted of seven poets, who were called the *Pleiades*, from the brilliancy of their genius, and the circumstance of their number, which was seven, corresponding with that of the stars called *Pleiades*, which are situated in the neck of the bull. The names of these writers were, *Callimachus*, *Aratus*, *Theocritus*, *Apollonius*,

Apollonius, *Nicander*, *Lycophron*, and *Philicus*; or, according to some writers, *Homer*, the tragic poet.* But some other writers give their names differently. The learned *Canterus*, in his *Prolegomena* to *Lycophron*, following *Hephæstion* the grammarian, as a better authority, asserts, that the following poets composed the *Pleiades*—*Homer* the younger, *Sositheus*, *Alexander*, *Philiscus*, *Sosiphanes*, *Lycophron*. These poets were natives of different countries, some of them natives of countries distant from *Egypt*.—They were attracted, in common, to *Alexandria*, by the encouragements which genius and learning derived from taste and bounty. There is a considerable degree of resemblance, in the style and manner of most of the *Pleiades*; but, of that I shall speak more particularly, in another place.

The *Ptolemies* of *Egypt*, or *Lagides*, were a most extraordinary dynasty of princes, and the continuance of their power forms a distinguished æra, in the history of literature. Some of them were virtuous and accomplished princes, others disgraced themselves, by the most despicable vices, and odious crimes; all, in common, had a turn for magnificence, were themselves persons of taste and learning, and proved themselves munificent and judicious patrons of philosophy, letters, and the fine arts; as well as judicious and successful promoters of trade and commerce. The unbounded opulence, which they possessed, enabled them to consult the wishes of their taste and liberality, in the utmost extent. They collected the treasures of learning, and the rare and curious productions of nature and art, and fos-

* This elegant and complimentary allusion, has not been appropriated exclusively, to the *Pleiades* of *Alexandria*.—Seven eminent *French* cotemporary poets were also called the *Pleiades*.

-ered

tered genius and talent, with a splendour, expence, and zeal, which have not been equalled by any potentate, who has preceded or followed them.—The first *Ptolemy* erected at *Alexandria* a museum or college, for the support of those who devoted their time to the study of the liberal arts; and adding to it a great library, for their use, drew, by that means, most of the learned men out of *Greece* to his metropolis. *Ptolemy* the second, and also the third, having herein followed the example of their predecessor, *Alexandria* became the place where the sciences flourished, when they were quite neglected elsewhere; most of the inhabitants of that city being bred up in the knowledge of some science or other.

Ptolemy Soter, the first of the race, who was a learned prince, and composed a history of *Alexander*, which was greatly esteemed by the ancients, but has not reached our times, founded an academy at *Alexandria*, or a society of learned men, who devoted themselves to the study of philosophy, and all other sciences. For the use of these, he made his collection of books, which, by degrees, grew under his successors to a prodigious bulk, and was reckoned the finest library in the world.—*Ammianus Marcellinus* relates, that, till the reign of *Aurelian*, the museum continued to be the habitation of excellent men, meaning the members of that society, which had been founded by *Ptolemy Soter*, for the improvement of all useful sciences. The members of this society were under the government of a president, whose station was so honourable, that, during the dominion of the *Ptolemies*, he was always nominated by those princes; and in the *Roman* times by the emperors. Within the museum was a very large hall, where they all met at their meals, for they were supplied plentifully with all sorts of provisions; the museum having been endowed, at its first foundation,

with large revenues. Hence, *Timon* the *Phliasian*, who was cotemporary with *Ptolemy Soter*, used to call it the coop; denoting thereby, that the philosophers were fed in the museum, and fattened, like birds in a coop.—Thus, we see the museum was an institution, of the same kind with the colleges of the present times; and, as, to these, the kingdoms where they flourish are indebted, for so many of the great men, which they have given to the world: so, *Alexandria* owed to its museum the many eminent writers it produced.

The celebrated *Demetrius Phalereus* was the first president of this seat of learning; and, as the library was a part of it, he had, in all probability, the books likewise under his care.—*Plutarch* tells us, that it was he, who first suggested to the king, the idea of founding both the museum and library; and that the king readily embraced the proposal of a man, so eminent for his learning, and other extraordinary qualifications.—*Demetrius* was charged, with the care of collecting these books, an employment not unworthy of so great a man, since, the king himself placed therein all his pleasure and diversion; a diversion suitable to the taste of a prince, who was himself a man of eminent learning, and an encourager of it in others.—*Livy*, in speaking of this library, stiles it, a noble monument of the wealth of the *Egyptian* kings, and of their commendable attention, in propagating knowledge among their subjects.

The second *Ptolemy* was, like his father, a most diligent collector of books. He employed an indefatigable industry in augmenting, at an immense charge, the library founded by his father. Nor did he rest there—he dispatched various agents into *Greece*, particularly *Aratus* the *Sicyonian*, to collect for him statues, drawings, and pictures. He is likewise said to have maintained, at vast expence, and to have sent into different

parts

parts of the world, skilful persons, in search of interesting objects of natural history, particularly, of all sorts of wild beasts, and birds; and is said, to have made a vast number of new discoveries, respecting the nature and properties of animals.

This second *Ptolemy*, who was ironically called *Philadelphus* by the *Alexandrians*, in their sarcastic manner, because he had put two of his brothers to death, was, abstracted from this act of cruelty, a great and accomplished prince; like his father, he possessed great learning himself, and was a liberal promoter of it in others. As he was a consummate judge of merit, and his liberality was equal to his taste, the fame of his generosity, not only drew to his court the famous *Pleiades*, but also a variety of other persons, distinguished for learning and genius, poets, historians, critics, philosophers, and artists.——Here, among others, flourished *Aristarchus* the critic, *Manetho*, the famous *Egyptian* historian, *Conon* and *Hipparchus*, two celebrated mathematicians, and *Zenodotus* of *Ephesus*, who first corrected the works of *Homer*. To this prince, also, the world is indebted, for the *Greek* translation of the *Scriptures*, which is known by the name of the *Septuagint*.

At the same time, this magnificent and generous prince applied himself, with unwearied attention, to business, studying all possible methods, to make his subjects happy, and raise his dominions to a flourishing condition.——He exerted himself to draw to *Egypt* the trade of the east, which the *Tyrians* had to that time carried on by sea to *Elath*, and thence, by the way of *Rhinocorura* to *Tyre*. To draw this trade into *Egypt*, *Ptolemy Philadelphus* built a city, on the west of the *Red Sea*, whence he sent out fleets to all the countries, with which the *Tyrians* had traded. He called it after the name of his mother *Berenice*; but the harbour not being

being convenient, *Myus Hormus*, a city in the neighbourhood, was preferred. All the commodities of the east were carried thence, on camels, to *Coptos*, a city on the *Nile*, where they were again shipt for *Alexandria*, and from that city disperst over the west, in exchange for the merchandize, which was exported to the east. Thus, the whole trade being fixed at *Alexandria*, that place became the chief mart of all the traffic, which was carried on between the east and the west, and continued to be the greatest empory in the world, for above seventeen hundred years. As *Ptolemy* intended to engross the whole trade of the east and west, he fitted out two great fleets to protect his trading subjects. One of these he kept in the *Red Sea*, the other in the *Mediterranean*; and not only protected trade, but held in subjection the maritime provinces of *Asia Minor*.—Such was *Ptolemy Philadelphus*. It might naturally be expected, that *Theocritus* and *Callimachus*, who had witnessed the wonders of his administration, had enjoyed the splendour and pleasures of his court, and tasted freely of his bounty, should pour out the dew of courtly praise.

The great pastoral poet has consecrated, to the fame of *Ptolemy*, that fine composition, his seventeenth *Idyll*.

"Ἄνδρων δ' αὖ Πτολεμαιος ἐνι πρωτοισι λεγεσθω
"Και πυματος και μεσσος ὁ γαρ προφερεστατος ἀνδρων,"
&c.

Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.

The poet, after a strain of sublime and ingenious panegyric, does not forget to expatiate, with all the feeling of experience, on the liberality of the monarch.

"And yet, he hoards not up his useless store,
"Like ants, still labouring, still amassing more.
"The holy shrines and temples are his care,
"For they the first-fruits of his favour share.

To

" To mighty kings his bounty he extends,
" To states confederate, and illustrious friends.
" No bard at *Bacchus'* festival appears,
" Whose lyre has pow'r to charm the ravish'd ears.
" But he bright honours, and rewards imparts,
" Due to his merits, equal to his arts.
" And poets hence, for deathless song renown'd,
" The generous fame of *Ptolemy* resound.
" At what more glorious can the wealthy aim,
" Than thus to purchase fair and lasting fame.
" The quick *Atridæ* this alone enjoy,
" While all the wealth and spoil of plunder'd *Troy*,
" That scap'd the raging fire, or whelming wave,
" Lies buried in oblivion's greedy grave.
" Close trod great *Ptolemy*, at virtue's call,
" His father's footsteps but surpass'd them all."——

Fawkes.

Callimachus, in his hymn to *Jupiter*, after having descanted, on the praises of the sovereign of the gods; in a strain of sublime flattery, and ingenious hyperbole, introduces the praise of *Ptolemy*; for, passing from the gods, to kings, the vicegerents of the deity, he is led, by an easy transition, to mention his own sovereign; and says of him——

—— " Περι προ γαρ ἐυρυ βεβηκεν.
" Εσπεριος κοινος γε τελει τα κεν ἠοι νοησῃ
" Εσπεριος τα μεγιστα, τα μειονα δ' ἐυτε νοησῃ."

On which passage, I cannot forbear remarking, that, most probably, the poet had in view the sublime sentence in *Genesis*—" And God said, let there be light, " and there was light."

" When mighty deeds his ruling genius wills,
" What morn has purpos'd pregnant eve fulfils,

Each

" Each minor work on thought obedient waits,
" His word is being, and his wish creates."—*Callimachus, Hymn to Jove.*

Such, in fact, was the ardour of this prince, in pursuit of his favourite objects, that, in the midst of a war with *Antiochus Theus*, king of *Syria*, he did not give over his search for books, pictures, and drawings.

The third *Ptolemy*, who was surnamed *Euergetes*, was a no less generous encourager of learning, than his father and grandfather had been, for he applied himself with the same care and attention to the enlarging of his library, and purchasing of books, at an immense charge; he invited with ample rewards to his court, all those who were of any note for their learning, and took great pleasure in improving his own knowledge by their conversation, for he was himself, as *Athenæus* informs us, well versed in all branches of learning, having been brought up in his youth by the famous *Aristarchus*, and he even wrote historical commentaries, which were in great repute.

One would hardly believe, that a prince, who is represented by historians as a monster, rather than a man, for such was the character of *Ptolemy Physcon*, should have deserved the reputation of being the restorer of letters, and the patron of learned men: yet this is attested by *Athenæus*, *Vitruvius*, *Epiphanius*, and others. *Athenæus* relates, that in the short intervals between his vicious excesses, and licentious orgies, he applied himself to the study of the polite arts and sciences. Nay, according to this author, he had a knowledge so extensive, and such ease in discoursing of all kinds of literature, that he acquired the surname of *Ptolemy* the philologist. The same author adds, that he wrote a history in twenty-four books, and a learned comment on *Homer*.

His

His history, as *Epiphanius* informs us, was in great repute among the ancients, and often quoted by those who wrote on the same subject. He, too, enriched the *Alexandrian* library, at vast expence; having sent learned men into all parts of the world, for that purpose, and allowed ample pensions to learned men, and distinguished philosophers.

In such a fostering seminary of talent, where a long succession of munificent and learned princes, formed in their court an academy for arts and literature, for genius and philosophy, the propensities of the sovereign impress a literary stile, a tone of cultivation, not only on the court, but on the people at large; and prepared, on the confines of *Libya*, a refinement and perfection of the *Greek* language, that equalled the happiest efforts of *Athens* herself, and produced a *Ptolemaic* age, which, though less known and celebrated, at least in modern times, may deserve to be placed in competition with the *Augustan* age of *Rome*. Boundless wealth to reward merit, attracted competitors, from every side, ambitious of obtaining the smile of royalty. No doubt, the great, the rich, and powerful of the court, who always imitate the propensities of the sovereign, wished to distinguish themselves, by an encouragement of genius and learning, according to the fashion of the day.——Thus, the poet found himself a personage of importance. He was cultivated, caressed, encouraged, and rewarded. Splendour, magnificence, wealth, and elegant luxury, shone on every side to elevate his fancy. All the means of cultivating the understanding were rendered generally accessible to all, in the magnificent repository of the sovereign, where were not only books, but every instrument and object of science, which the world then knew. To this were added philosophical converse, elegant society, the emulation of genius and talent,

lent, the collision of mind, all tending to mature and digest the understanding. Here was collected the splendour of beauty, with that of pomp and opulence. The taste and elegance of *Greece* were blended with the state and magnificence of *Asia*. Every delight of sense, every possible indulgence of the fancy, tended to fill the mind with images of delight. The ear was perpetually filled with the ravishing sounds of exquisite harmony; the eyes were incessantly gratified with the surrounding forms of animate and inanimate beauty.—What a situation for a poet! wrapt in the bosom of ease and indulgence, exempt from any toil, but that which the inspiration of his muse demanded, freed from the intrusion of every care; excepting that of his reputation, exempt from every source of vexation, except those created by the irritability of talent, the wakeful jealousy of genius and sensibility, and the restless impatience of competition. The exertions of genius were facilitated, by an easy access to an admirable library and museum; and, at the same time, called out, by a variety of contending and powerful motives, and interests.

At the court of *Alexandria*, avarice was attracted, and satiated, to its utmost wish, by the noble rewards which the bounteous hand of royalty showered on merit. The pride and consciousness of genius were stimulated to exertion by competition, in which talent strove to surpass itself. The mind displayed powers, which she did not imagine she possest, and arrived at heights, which she thought herself incapable of attaining. Vanity was flattered, by the hope of attracting the smiles, and deserving the applause, of the fair and young, of the great and the brave, of the rich and the noble, of the learned and the wise, of the elegant and the accomplished—in fine, of every thing that the known world could then produce, of amiable, brilliant, and respectable.

table.—The ambitious spirit marked, with graver eyes, the predilection of the sovereign, for the faculties and endowments, which he possest; and anticipated, from the favour and encouragement of a discerning monarch, a certain road to eminence, in the display of genius, the exertions of art, and the researches of science.

The literary stile of conversation, that prevailed at the court of the *Ptolemies*, and the amenity and condescension of those accomplished princes, may be collected from a story, which is related of *Ptolemy Soter*, the first of the dynasty.——This prince was commonly supposed to be of mean descent—one day, after he had heard, for a long time, a vain and trifling grammarian, who made a display of his skill in antiquities——he interrupted the torrent of learning, with a question—"Since you are so well versed in the learning of the "ancients, tell me, without hesitation, O grammarian, "who was the father of *Peleus?*"——The grammarian answered with promptitude—"Tell me, first, O king, "if you can, who was the father of *Lagus?*"——This answer produced no small indignation in the courtiers; but *Ptolemy*, applauding the humour, and pleased with the freedom of the grammarian, told them, that if it was beneath the dignity of a king to bear a jest, it still less became him to jest on his subject.

Such was the happy situation of the arts and letters, at the court of *Alexandria*——a situation how different from that, in which they have been too generally found, in times both ancient and modern! Melancholy, indeed, is the history of arts and sciences in this respect.—It is hardly any thing but a martyrology, filled with the lamentations, and mournful destinies, of the victims of genius; which might lead us to think, that there is an almost general conspiracy, a confederacy of ingratitude, among men, which has disposed them to condemn their benefactors

benefactors to the dark and doubtful recompence of posthumous fame; and to repay the exertions of those, who have presumptuously attempted to delight, instruct, or reform the world, with discouragement in every form, with envy and vexation, with pain, with poverty, and with neglect.

It was the fortune of *Apollonius* the *Rhodian*, as he has been generally stiled, to be born in a country, and an age, thus auspicious to men of letters; how he acquired the appellation of the *Rhodian*, will be seen in the progress of this essay; but, it seems to be ascertained, beyond a doubt, that he was an *Egyptian* by birth, and a native of *Alexandria*. One may suppose, that his rank and condition in life were not mean. If we may judge, indeed, from the celebrity and eminence of the preceptor, to whom the care of his youth was entrusted, we must incline to place him in the higher classes of society. This early instructor of our poet, was no less a person, than the famous poet *Callimachus*. This distinguished poet was a native of *Crete*, a city of *Libya*: he arrived at the zenith of his reputation, in the time of *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, and during the first years of his successor *Euergetes*—about the 125th *Olympiad*. He at first taught polite literature publicly, at *Eleusis*, a suburb of the city of *Alexandria*—he was afterwards invited into the household of the monarch, where he obtained an establishment, and remained for a considerable time.

As *Apollonius* studied under *Callimachus*, we must conclude, that he was considerably younger than that poet, a conclusion, which is strengthened by the consideration that he survived his master; near whose tomb he was interred at his decease. It is probable, therefore, that *Apollonius* was born towards the close of the reign of *Ptolemy Soter*—perhaps, within the last three or four

four years of it—if so, he was a little more than twenty years old, about the middle of the reign of *Philadelphus*, which, according to the best accounts, lasted thirty-eight years.—Thus, *Apollonius* might have been twenty years old, or under that age, when *Callimachus* was a public teacher at *Eleusis*; and between forty and fifty years old, when, in the reign of *Euergetes*, he was appointed to the care of the *Alexandrine* library.

Previous to the time of *Plutarch*, the utility and philosophy of biography were not much considered, among the ancients—to the irreparable loss of modern times, enquiries into the springs of action, details of the labours of men of genius and learning, have been rare and scanty; and the glory of critical and philosophical biography, has been peculiarly reserved for later ages. Yet, even now, how imperfect, in general, is the biography of talent! It would be of the utmost advantage to the cause of literature; it would tend to the developement of the motives and accidents, that influence the human mind; and lead to the perfection of the history of arts and sciences, and to an extension of the philosophy of the human heart and intellect; had we minute details of the course of education, of the early transactions, the modes and habits of study, of the professional and literary labours, and of the private life of men of genius and learning. Such morsels of information, when they happen to be preserved, and communicated to the world, are of inestimable value. They form the most amiable and engaging part of biography. But it is much to be lamented, that such memorials are still rare.—Condemned to struggle with sordid difficulties, to languish in penury and obscurity, neglected and undervalued by some, traduced and satirized by others of their cotemporaries, the worth and importance of the opinions, the labours, and the lives of men of genius

nius and learning, are not known until the men themselves are for ever lost to this world. Thus, we are equally ignorant, how far the family circumstances, and course of their early life, have influenced the studies, and determined the labours of learned men—and how far, again, the course of their studies may have contributed to influence the conduct and temper of their riper age. Entombed through life, the days of those splendid yet depreciated beings glide away, in darkness and in silence; they pass on, to the gulf of eternity, unobserved, like the noiseless rivers, that work their way beneath the earth, and suddenly burst on the day, to clothe the astonished valley with beauty and abundance. It is also unfortunate, for literary men, and artists, that the little which we know respecting them, is usually transmitted through an unfavourable medium. That their jealousies, their rivalships, their petty squabbles, their impatience, their irritability, and ridiculous distresses, are all transmitted to us by the industrious care of malice and envy; while the features of benevolence, the circumstances that might do them honour, their loves, their friendships, and their virtues, are lost in oblivion.

It seems, that the happy situation of poets, at the elegant court of the *Ptolemies*, was not sufficient to tranquillize their spirits, or exempt them wholly from the corroding influence of jealousy, and mutual animosity. The unbounded munificence of the sovereign was incapable of satiating the cupidity of his poets, or excluding the baneful effects of envy and rivalship. Though *Apollonius*, in his early years, had been, as we observed, the disciple of *Callimachus:* the connexion of these illustrious poets ended in the most violent animosity, and acts of decided and open hostility. The circumstances of this quarrel, and the causes whence it originated, have not been transmitted to us. But, certain it is, that

Callimachus

Callimachus must have been actuated, by no small degree of resentment, since he composed a poem, of considerable length, in which, under the fictitious name of *Ibis*, he satirizes, in the most pointed terms, the ignorance, the malevolence, and calumnies, of a certain person. It has been the universal opinion of the learned, that the person, meant by *Callimachus*, was no other than our poet *Apollonius*. It should seem, that this poem was written with considerable strength and ability of invective, since it was generally known among the ancients.

That the *Ibis* of *Callimachus* had obtained a high degree of reputation, we may infer, from the circumstance of *Ovid* having adopted the name, as well as the plan of this poem, in his satire on a malicious enemy and calumniator, which has reached us among his works. Probably, indeed, the *Ibis* of *Ovid* contains many particular passages, translated or imitated from the *Ibis* of *Callimachus*. He speaks thus of the poem of *Callimachus*, as of a performance well known, and in the hands of every body.

"Nunc quo *Battiades** inimicum devovet *Ibin*,
"Hoc ego devoveo teque tuosque modo.—
"Utque ille, historiis involvam carmina cæcis,
"Non soleam quamvis hoc genus ipse sequi."

As *Battus'* son denotes in vengeful line.
Thus I to shame devote both thee and thine.
Like him the path of fables dark I chuse,
Tho' such disguise but little suits my muse."

The expression *devovet*—devotes with curses, is characteristic of the deadly rancour, with which *Callimachus* pursued his foe—and the expressions of *cæcis involvam carmina historiis*, show, that his cowardice, or, to use

* The father of *Callimachus* was named *Battus*.

the mildest term, his caution, was equal to his malignity. It appears hence too, that the story of this ancient literary quarrel was well known, and much celebrated among the ancients.——The superabundance of ancient mythology, and learned allusion, with which great part of the *Ibis* is crouded, resembles the style of *Callimachus* so much, that I am apt to think, the *Latin* poet closely followed the *Greek* original. One cannot avoid remarking, in the poets of the *Alexandrine* school, many passages of such strong resemblance, as would tempt us to think they may have been imitated from the *Scriptures*. In the *Ibis* of *Ovid* we may remark, a severity of malediction, not unlike that which occurs in some of the psalms of *David*.† And in the elaborate details of misery, to which the malignant *Ibis* is devoted, by the incensed poet, there is much that reminds us of the gloomy paintings in the poetical book of *Job*.

If it be true, that *Hyginus* the grammarian, according to the conjecture of *Salvagnius*, or the person, whoever he might have been, whom *Ovid* has thought proper to designate by the feigned name of *Ibis*, not only attacked him in his exile, with calumnies, and false accusations, but also attempted to estrange from him the affections of a beloved and constant wife; we cannot wonder, that the resentful feelings of the injured and indignant poet dictated such a strain of invective and asperity.

" Quisquis is est, (nam nomen adhuc utcumque tacebo)
" Cogit inassuetus sumere tela manū
" Ille relegatum gelidos aquilonis ad ortus
" Non sinit exilio delituisse suo.
" Vulneraque immitis requiem querentia vexat
" Jactat, et in toto verba canina foro:

† For instance, the 35th, 59th, 69th, and 109th.

" Perpetuoque

" Perpetuoque mihi sociatam federe lecti
" Non patitur miseri funera flere viri.
" Cumque ego quassa mei complectar membra carinæ;
" Naufragii tabulas pugnat habere mei."—*Ibis Ovidii.*

The wretch, whom yet the muse forbears to name,
Provokes my hand unwonted darts to aim.
Ev'n banishment from him is no retreat,
He barks his slanders, in the crouded street.
The mental wounds his spite forbids to close,
His spite bereaves my sorrows of repose.
His spite would basely sever from my side,
The loyal fair, by *Hymen's* bands allied.
Forbids her love my civil death to mourn,
Of pious sorrows would defraud my urn.—
Amidst my shipwreck one dear plank remain'd;
In life's rude billows it my soul sustain'd.
Fondly I clasp'd it, with a husband's pride;
Yet, cruel, he would that embrace divide.

Though the person, who was the object of the original *Ibis*, is clearly ascertained, the causes, which provoked this act of cruel hostility, are only to be sought in conjecture—in all probability, they were much less real and justifiable, than those of which *Ovid* complains —perhaps the quarrel originated only in the rivalry of talent, and jealousy of authorship; perhaps *Callimachus*, in full possession of literary fame, might view the growing genius of a younger poet with inauspicious eyes, and feel himself disposed to *cuff down rising merit**—perhaps *Apollonius*, with the rashness and sanguine spirit incident to youth, might have presumed too much on the friendship, and good offices, of his preceptor, and guide in the tuneful art, and finding himself disappointed in these expectations, might have shown some of that irri-

* *Shakespeare.*

tability which has been ascribed to poets—perhaps he might have shown his early compositions to *Callimachus*, who might have treated them with contempt, and discouraged him from the prosecution of poetical studies—perhaps *Callimachus*, through jealousy or contempt, might have contributed to the ill success of his first essays—whether any, or all of these motives, influenced the youthful and ardent mind of *Apollonius*: it should seem that he exprest himself with considerable severity respecting *Callimachus*.

Whatever may have been the original ground of quarrel, the genius of *Apollonius* seems to have been so elegant, his writings breathe such an amiable spirit, that I should be much inclined, to acquit him of unprovoked asperity, and to retort the charge of ill temper and malignity on his antagonist; at least, there is a passage of *Callimachus* yet remaining, which shows that he was not of a very conciliating, or placable disposition, but truly one of the *genus irritabile vatum—jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel.*——That injuries, whether real or imaginary, sunk deep into his spirit, and found there a temper impatient, resentful, querulous, by no means prone to forget or forgive, or indisposed to retaliate.—The lines in question are part of the conclusion of his hymn to *Apollo*. He there speaks of some cotemporary writer, who, as he says, envied him; and yet, at the same time, endeavoured to exalt himself, at his expence, by a depreciating comparison of their works, in respect to magnitude and dignity. In the same strain of comparison, *Suckling*, in his session of poets, introduces *Ben Johnson* undervaluing his brother bards—because *his were called works, while others wrote but plays.*—*Callimachus* introduces his enemy and rival as saying, in the same spirit, *I do not value the poet, who does not produce something great like the ocean.*—This something *vast* seems

seems to be designed to characterize, in a sarcastic manner, the *Argonautics of Apollonius*, a work of considerable length, and more comprehensive in its plan, than any of the numerous poems of *Callimachus*. The poet seems to represent his epic rival, or censurer, as taking merit to himself, for having produced a regular heroic poem, and decrying his adversary, as the author only of some fugitive miscellanies. He personifies envy in his person, instilling malignant suggestions into the ears of *Phebus*.

" 'Ο φθονος 'Απολλωνος ἐπ' ϋαλα λαθριος ἐιπεν
" 'Ουκ ἀγαμαι τον ἀοιδον ὁς ϋδ' ὁσα ποντος ἀειδει," &c.—
Hymnus in Apollinem.

But secret envy, in *Apollo's* ear,
Insidious whispers—" Humble is the bard,
" Of praise unworthy, who in short excursion
" Exhausts his strength. The genuine bard is he—
" Who flows abundant, as the mighty ocean,
" Magnificent and vast."—The god replied—
Resentful, and the canker'd slander spurn'd.
" Deep is th' *Assyrian* torrent, but it flows
" With mud and filth discolor'd—who from thence
" Would draw libation for the holy altar,
" Of *Ceres* pure?—No, from the limpid spring,
" That pours the small but unpolluted stream,
" The gods accept their tribute."—Hail, O king,
Of strains melodious! may an evil doom
On envy wait, and the calumnious tongue.

Though *Callimachus* declaims thus warmly against envy, it does not follow, that he was free from its influence. We know, how poets are apt to talk, and shift the faults from themselves on their rivals; it is very likely, that he viewed *Apollonius* with secret envy, and that the young poet suffered considerably, by the prevalence

valence of this hateful passion in the bosom of his *guide, philosopher,* and *friend.* And he, in return, might have been provoked to express some degree of contempt, for the lighter and occasional productions of his master.

Certain it is, that *Apollonius* early recited some portion of his poem on the *Argonauts* at *Alexandria,* but the success of this first essay of his talents did not correspond with his expectations, or with the perfection, which he afterwards attained; for, instead of gaining applause, he was received with contempt and ridicule. It is likely, that his audience might have been composed of severe and fastidious critics. The poet, perhaps, began to write at an immature age, and before his judgment was formed, or he had acquired the useful art of blotting; and the rash presumption of youth might have impelled him to obtrude on the world, the crude and hasty productions of a boy's muse.

Certainly, it was not the fault of *Callimachus,* that *Apollonius* made this unpromising attempt. We are told, that the latter, after he had composed his poem of the *Argonautics,* showed it to the former, for his opinion and corrections. Whether *Callimachus* spoke the language of sincerity and sound criticism, or was actuated by the jealousy of old established reputation, that——

Bears, like the *Turk,* no brother near the throne.

But it is said, that he treated this production with contempt, and gave its author no encouragement to prosecute his poetical studies. The author ventured to appeal from his private judgment, to the public, and disappointment was the portion of his temerity.

A poet, with all the superciliousness of established fame and fashion about him, tremblingly alive to fears, and solicitude, for the continuance of his poetical supereminence,

eminence, and apprehensive, in the extreme, lest some new adventurer should encroach on the elevated ground, which, he had taken on *Parnassus*, cannot be supposed a very equitable or indulgent critic, of the works of a young poet: or a very sanguine encourager of rising merit. This may be seen in the conduct of *Addison* towards *Pope*, when the latter consulted him respecting his translation of *Homer*. It was, therefore, unlucky for *Apollonius*, perhaps, that he selected *Callimachus*, as the censor of his epic poem. The veteran bard might have been alarmed, at the appearance and rise of a young plant, which seemed to croud and choak the growth of his own laurels. Disappointed of the assistance and encouragement, which the sanguine temper of the young *Apollonius* might have expected to derive, from the preceptor and friend of his youth, his master and leader in the poetic art, his mind was naturally filled with a lively resentment—animosity took the place of respect and confidence.——Exasperated friends often become the most furious and irreconcileable enemies. It was the case here, between persons of lively feelings—the one, irritated by disappointment and contempt, the other, stimulated by jealousy and envy.

The indisposition of *Callimachus*, towards the literary success of *Apollonius*, might have conduced to the unfavourable manner, in which the specimen of the *Argonautics* was received, when recited by its author in public——he, perhaps, damned with faint praise—and, without sneering, taught the crowd to sneer.—The preceding hypothesis is supported, by the account of the transaction, which has been transmitted to us, by the author of a short account of *Apollonius*, which has reached our times. From this relation, succinct as it is, we may collect, that the foregoing statement, of the grounds of enmity between the illustrious tutor, and his

no

no less illustrious scholar is founded in truth.—These are the words of the anonymous writer—" Οὗτος ἐμα-
" θήτευσε Καλλιμάχῳ καὶ συνέλαξε ταῦτα ποιήματα ἐπειδὴ-
" ξαῖος, σφοδρὰ δὲ ἀπολυχων καὶ ἐρυθριασας, παρεγενετο ἐν τῇ
" Ροδῃ."

It is probable, that *Callimachus* exprest his mean opinion of the poetry of *Apollonius*, with little reserve, or management, or care not to wound the feelings of a young adventurer. It may be, that the pupil, in the sanguine spirit of youth, might have built too much on the good offices of his preceptor; and expected, through his countenance, and established credit, to have been introduced into public notice, and to have been received, as a fashionable poet, at the court of the *Ptolemies*.—Whatever might have been his expectations, or their foundation, certain it is, that he was wofully disappointed; and felt his disappointment, with all the keen sensibility, natural to a poetic mind. He prepared for revenge of the injury, whether real or imaginary, with the weapons, which genius had given him. Nor was *Callimachus* slow to retaliate; he paid back the invectives of *Apollonius* with interest; and lacerated his former friend, with much detail of invective, and, as it should seem, with considerable effect, in a satirical poem, which was entitled *Ibis*——a name, probably adopted by the author, on account of some fanciful resemblance, which he thought he could discover between the *Egyptian* bird called *Ibis*, and the person against whom his severity was directed.——*Micyllus* says, the name was adopted, not only as being expressive of impurity, baseness, and depraved appetites; the *Ibis* being a bird, that preyed on rats and other vermin—but, also, as denoting, that the person in question was a native *Egyptian*; the *Ibis* being a bird peculiar to *Egypt*.—The *Ibis* of *Callimachus* must, certainly, have been a production

tion of very considerable merit, in its kind; since, though written on a private, personal, and local subject, it retained such a degree of celebrity, in the time of *Ovid*, that the *Roman* poet was induced to propose it to himself, as an object of imitation, and even to borrow the title for his own poem, as one which was generally known, and likely to excite public curiosity. A convincing proof of its popularity.

It appears, that *Apollonius* must have been foiled in this poetical warfare, as well as in his attempt to appeal from the contemptuous judgment of a rival poet, to the tribunal of an impartial public, by a recital of his productions, according to the custom, which then prevailed;—his works were received with scorn and ridicule. One great advantage *Callimachus* possest over his antagonist, in this controversy. His fame was more fully established; his person better known at court; he had the countenance of the great, and the cry of fashion, in his favour. Opprest by an unequal competition, filled with the consciousness of neglected worth, fired with indignation, the victim of his own sensibility, *Apollonius*, unable to bear the contempt of his fellow citizens, the contumely of his brother poet, full of shame, disgust, and vexation, left *Alexandria*, the place of his nativity, and retired to *Rhodes*, which then flourished in commerce, and had ever been distinguished, for a love of literature, and the arts.

Our poet seems to have experienced such a reception at *Rhodes*, as was due to his genius and learning. He was domiciliated there, and established himself, as a teacher of logic and rhetoric. From his residence in this island, *Apollonius* may have obtained the sirname of the *Rhodian*. Here he employed his leisure moments, in revising and polishing his works. This he appears, from the result, to have done with full success. For having

shown them in their improved state, to persons of taste and judgment, they procured for him a very high degree of reputation; insomuch, that the people of *Rhodes*, as a mark of their esteem, conferred on him the freedom of their state, together with other distinguished honours.

In this agreeable situation, and in full enjoyment of a poetical reputation, and of the respect and admiration, which were paid him by the *Rhodians*, our poet remained many years. He did not return to *Alexandria*, until after *Callimachus* had paid the debt of nature, and left him, without a rival and competitor. It should seem, that the fame of his talents past from *Rhodes*, to the neighbouring city of *Alexandria*, which led his countrymen, to know his value, and repent of that ancient contempt, which they had shown him. It is probable, that he was invited home by *Ptolemy Euergetes*, and received by the *Alexandrians* with signal attention; for we find, that he was soon after appointed, to the care of the royal library and museum; a trust, as we have already seen, of fashionable rank, and considerable importance; which induced a frequent and familiar intercourse, with the literary sovereigns of *Egypt*; and had uniformly been conferred on men of first rate abilities and learning.

It must have been towards the latter end of the reign of *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, perhaps, about ten years from its close, that *Apollonius* emigrated to *Rhodes*. *Callimachus* was in his glory, during the reign of *Philadelphus*, whom he celebrates. And it must be presumed, that he did not return to *Alexandria*, until several years had elapsed of the reign of *Euergetes*, the successor of *Philadelphus*; for, considering the high credit and influence, which *Callimachus* had acquired, at the *Egyptian* court, and the deadly and irreconcileable enmity, and cruel interchange of invective, and ill offices, which had taken

place

place between him and *Apollonius*; it is not very likely, that the latter should have ventured back to *Alexandria*, before the enmity, and the genius, of his powerful opponent, were laid to rest for ever in the grave. Had *Apollonius* returned to *Egypt*, during the lifetime of *Callimachus*, and had any reconciliation taken place, between these illustrious rivals, such an incident could not have failed of making an impression, on cotemporary and subsequent writers; and we should not now remain in total ignorance of such an interesting transaction. If, then, *Apollonius* did not return, until after the decease of *Callimachus*, some years of the reign of *Euergetes* must have been then past; for *Callimachus* continued to flourish under that prince, who succeeded to the throne, in the second year of the 125th *Olympiad*.

Apollonius was wise enough, to derive good fruit, from the malignity of *Callimachus*, and his early disappointments. He saw, and corrected, the defects and blemishes of his poem, and availed himself completely, of the retirement, and opportunities for study, which he found, at *Rhodes*. In consequence, after his return, when he again produced his work, and handed it about in *Alexandria*, it was then universally admired; and obtained for its author the highest applause. His advancement to fame, and honour, not unaccompanied by emolument, was now as rapid, as the disgrace of his youth had been unexpected and mortifying; since, as we have said already, he was promoted to the care of the famous *Alexandrine* library; an appointment, which seemed to be set apart, as the reward of merit, and had been uniformly bestowed on men of the first talents, and literary eminence. As to *Apollonius*, in particular, he succeeded to a most distinguished predecessor, the famous *Eratosthènes*, who had, like *Apollonius* himself, studied

studied under *Callimachus*, and was celebrated as a poet, a philosopher, an astronomer, and historian.

Fortune having thus made amends to our poet, for her former persecution, and advanced him to the enjoyment of a just reputation, and that place, to which merit seldom aspired in vain, at the court of *Alexandria*, was resolved not to subject him, to any reverse, and called him away, while he was in the full possession of fame, and prosperity. It is not stated, in any of the short notices respecting *Apollonius*, which have reached us, how long he survived his master and rival; but, it is somewhat remarkable, that, after his death, his remains were deposited in the same tomb with *Callimachus*. As we know, that the latter poet was in the highest estimation, this circumstance must have been intended, as a mark of the utmost respect to the memory of *Apollonius*; and meant to show, that the poets, thus associated in their death and funeral ceremonies, had, in their lives, been equals in genius and fame. Such are the imperfect accounts, which antiquity has transmitted to us, respecting this admirable writer, we have only to regret, that they are not more copious, and satisfactory; but the imitation of *Virgil*, and the intrinsic beauties of his poem, will for ever remain the most perfect and glorious monument of his reputation.

We have, in the second volume of *Brunk's Analecta*, p. 358, a single epigram, consisting only of a couplet, which is entitled—"*By Apollonius the Grammarian.*"—The subject and tendency of this epigram, cannot leave even the shadow of a doubt, of its being written by our author, in the course of his memorable contest with *Callimachus*; and the style of it, short as it is, may suffice to show, that the tone of ancient poetical polemics was not a whit more elegant or refined, than the invective

tive of modern *Grub-street*, of which *Pope* has given so many bright samples, in the notes on his *Dunciad*. The epigram is as follows.

> Καλλιμαχος το καθαρμα, το παιγνιον, ὁ ξυλινος νους
> Αἰτιος ὁ γραψας ΑΙΤΙΑ Καλλιμαχου.

It is to be observed, that, in the second line, there is a poor pun, or play upon the words, between αἰτιος and Αἰτια. To enable the reader to comprehend the force of which, it is necessary to inform him, that *Callimachus* had produced a large work, the title of which was Αἰτια; and the subject, most probably, *The Causes of Things*.——If *Apollonius* produced many *jeux d' esprit* of this kind, it is not surprising, that he provoked his rival to publish the *Ibis*, by way of retaliation. The morsel now cited, seems to be the only remnant of *Apollonius*, great or small, exclusive of the *Argonautics*, which has reached our time; but he wrote many other works, which are enumerated by *Fabricius*,* in his account of this author.—As Περι Αρχιλοχου, on the subject of *Archilochus*.—A collection of epigrams—Κανωπος πρωτος και δευτερος.—A work, which seems to have been very extensive, entitled Κτισεις, *sive Origines Urbium*, on the origin of cities.—This work seems to have been divided into sections or books, as Αλεξανδρειας Κτισις, or the Founding of *Alexandria*.—Καυνος, *sive* Καυνου Κτισις, the Founding of *Caunus*.—Κνιδης Κτισις——Ναυκρατεως Κτισις, *alias* Ποντικα.—This must have been a most valuable and learned work.—From the details of genealogy, and antiquity, and the many allusions to ancient rites and customs, which *Apollonius* has occasionally introduced, in his *Argonautics*, it appears, that he was eminently qualified for such an undertaking. He also wrote critical

* *Vide Fabricii Thesaurus curante Harles.*

and

and grammatical observations on *Homer*,* probably for the use of his scholars, while he taught at *Rhodes*.—The loss of these observations, on the great father of epic poetry, by a great succeeding poet, like *Apollonius*, so highly accomplished by education, so refined by taste, so copiously stored, and furnished, with various learning, can never be sufficiently deplored by the learned world.——*Apollonius*, we are told, was succeeded by *Aristonymus*, in his honourable situation, as keeper of the *Alexandrian* library, and museum.——Such are the faint and imperfect notices, which the curiosity and admiration of posterity are now able to collect, respecting this great poet. But, his noblest monument, and his truest and most advantageous eulogium and history, are to be found in his immortal production; and in the flattering imitation of succeeding genius.

* They are mentioned by the ancient *Greek* scholiast on the *Iliad*, Lib. I. v. 3., and Lib. II. v. 456.

ESSAY THE SECOND.

ON THE

ARGONAUTIC EXPEDITION.

NEXT to the siege of *Troy*, the *Argonautic* expedition is the event, of those early and fabulous times, which are commonly called, the heroic ages of *Greece*, that excites the most lively interest; and has employed the genius, and the pens, of the greatest number of writers among the ancients. It may even be doubted, whether the eventful narrative of the primeval daring, and marvellous adventures, of this matchless band of heroes, does not possess greater attractions, and more powerfully engage the attention, than *The Tale of Troy divine*. The conception of the *Argonautic* enterprise, was more bold and original; the dangers, to which it was exposed, were more imminent and dreadful in their form; the incidents, with which it was diversified, were, if possible, more grand; certainly, more romantic and extraordinary. Our curiosity is held more on the stretch, by the marvellous adventures, the hair-breadth escapes, the manners and customs of strange and remote nations, which are presented to us, in rapid succession, in the narrative of this expedition, than by the artful contexture, of any tale of fairy, or legend of romance. A band of heroes, and demigods, committing themselves

selves to untried dangers, braving the menaces of a stormy and uncertain element, exploring unknown and far distant regions, conflicting with storms by sea, and savage beasts, and more savage men, by land; the prudence, the patience, and good conduct of the leader; the magnanimity and perseverance of his companions—altogether present one of the most awful and magnificent spectacles, that can well be conceived.

Such, as a narrative, are the general merits of this story, even at this day. On the attention of *Greeks*, while *Greece* remained, it had the strongest claims. All the most celebrated heroes of antiquity, the reputed offspring of all their deities, the progenitors of all their most illustrious dynasties, the destroyers of monsters, the avengers of guilt, the founders of states and kingdoms, the sages, the legislators, and primeval bards of *Greece*, were collected together for this expedition, and leagued in the enterprise, by friendship, and virtuous emulation. The *Argonautic* assemblage may be considered, as a nursing seminary, whence issued all the illustrious spirits, of the romantic ages of *Greece*.—— The voyage of the *Argonauts* may be regarded, in some degree, as the poetical or traditional parent of the subsequent heroic or fabulous histories, the rape of *Helen*, the sieges of *Thebes*, and of *Troy*, the wanderings of *Ulysses*.—It is highly probable, that the legendary relations, handed down by *Orpheus*, and other older bards, of the perils, and wonderful adventures, of these first of navigators, filled and enlarged the imagination of *Homer*, and, exciting his emulation, led him to produce his immortal poems.

The occasion of the *Argonautic* voyage is thus represented, by ancient tradition, as we find it preserved in the *Greek* writers.—*Phryxus* and *Helle* were the children of *Athamas*, by a former wife, their stepmother

Ino,

Ino, the daughter of *Cadmus*, had the art to persuade her husband, that it was necessary to sacrifice them. The destined victims escaped from her rage, and were borne over the sea by a ram, whose fleece was of gold; by which tradition it seems to be intimated, that they escaped from *Greece*, in a vessel, which bore the ensign of a golden ram. They steered their course to *Colchis*, a country which is now called *Mingrelia*, a part of *Georgia*: *Hellè* is said to have fallen from this miraculous conveyance, and was drowned by the way, in the narrow sea, which from her took the name of the *Hellespont*, now the strait of the *Dardanelles*.——*Phryxus* arriving at *Colchis*, was entertained by *Æetes*, king of that region, and obtained his daughter *Chalciopè* in marriage. He sacrificed the ram, which had borne him over the sea, and presented the fleece to the monarch, who deposited this fleece, which was all of gold, in a grove consecrated to *Mars*, where it was guarded, by a dragon, who never slept. To obtain this treasure, the fame of which had travelled into *Greece*, was the object of the dangerous and romantic expedition of the *Argonauts*.

Such is the ancient fabulous tradition. It has been variously expounded, by various writers.—*Strabo* and *Arrian* inform us, that it was a practice of the *Colchians*, to collect gold dust on mount *Caucasus*, by extending fleeces across the beds of the torrents, by which it was washed down; a process, which, I believe, is still employed, in some places. The *Argonauts*, being desirous of possessing themselves of the treasures of gold, which the *Colchians* thus amassed, the fable was formed, of their going in quest of the golden fleece; these fleeces, when they were replenished with gold dust, appearing as so many fleeces of gold.—*Varro* and *Pliny* pretend, that this fable owes its origin, to the very fine and precious

cious wool of the country, and that the voyages, which some merchants of *Greece* made, to purchase it, gave rise to the fiction. One may add, that as the *Colchians* carried on a considerable traffic, in the skins of the fox, the martin, and other valuable kinds of peltry, this might have been an additional motive, for the voyage of the *Argonauts*.—*Palephatus** imagined, one can scarce conjecture on what grounds, that, by the *Golden Fleece*, was designated a beautiful golden statue, which the mother of *Pelops* had caused to be made, and which *Phryxus* had carried away with him into *Colchis*.—*Suidas* is of opinion, that the fleece of gold was a book in parchment, which contained the secret of making gold; an object, worthy of the ambition, or rather of the avarice, not of *Greece* only, but of the whole world; and his opinion has been adopted by all the alchymists—— The celebrated *Bartholinus*, in concurrence with *Suidas*, has endeavoured to give a mystic sense, to this story of the *Golden Fleece*, and the *Argonautic* expedition; and to find in it, a covert allusion to the art of transmuting metals into gold. He maintains, as had been asserted by *Suidas* before him, that the *Golden Fleece* was a parchment book, containing the grand secret; that the dragon or serpent was descriptive of mercury or quicksilver; and so on.—In the same manner, *Tollius*, and others, have endeavoured to explain the story of the *Trojan* horse; the change of *Jupiter* into a shower of gold; the adulterous intercourse of *Mars* and *Venus*; in short, the whole circle of fabulous metamorphosis, and *Heathen* mythology.

Sir *Isaac Newton* thinks, that the *Argonautic* expedition was really an embassy, sent by the *Greeks*, during the intestine divisions in *Egypt*, in the reign of *Ameno-*

* *De Incredibilibus.*

phis,

phis, to persuade the nations on the coast of the *Euxine* and *Mediterranean* sea, to take that opportunity, of shaking off the yoke of *Egypt*, which had been imposed on them by *Sesostris*, in his victorious career; and that the design of obtaining the golden fleece, was only a pretence to cover their true object. In forming this opinion, though it is supported with much ingenuity and plausibility, the great philosopher, seems to have been not a little influenced, by the desire of maintaining a favourite system, and desirous of bending to meet it, the different relations of history and tradition.

The learned Mr. *Bryant* gives a very different explanation of this tradition, which, according to him, refers to the circumstance of *Noah's* ark.—"The main plot, (says he) as transmitted to us, is, certainly, a fable, replete with inconsistencies and contradictions; yet many writers, ancient and modern, have taken the account in the gross, and without exception to any particular part, presumed to make use of it, for a stated æra."*—Mr. *Bryant* contends, that this history, on which Sir *Isaac Newton* built so much, did not relate to *Greece*, though adopted by the people of that country.——He maintains, that Sir *Isaac's* calculation rests on a weak foundation; that it is doubtful, whether such persons as *Chiron* and *Museus* ever existed; and still more doubtful, whether they formed a sphere, for the use of the *Argonauts*.—He offers many arguments, to show, that the expedition could not, at any rate, be a *Grecian* transaction; nor could the sphere, in question, be a *Grecian* work: and, if not, that it must, certainly, be the produce of *Egypt;* since the astronomy of *Greece*, confessedly, came from that country.—He contends,

* As Sir *Isaac Newton*, who endeavours to make it a connecting point, between sacred and profane history.

that,

that, " Consequently, the figures on this sphere must " have come from the same quarter; and, instead of " alluding, as Sir *Isaac Newton* supposes, to the *Argo-* " *nautic* expedition, they must have been *Egyptian* hie- " roglyphics." After an examination of the particulars of the voyage, the different routes, which the *Argonauts* are supposed to have taken, and the inconsistencies, with which the story abounds; Mr. *Bryant* observes, that " The *Greeks* borrowed their mythology, as well " as their rites, from *Egypt;* and that it was founded " on ancient history, transmitted by hieroglyphic repre- " sentations. These, by length of time, became ob- " scure, and the sign was taken for the reality. Hence " arose the fable about the bull of *Europa*, and the like. " Under all these is couched the same history, under a " different allegory or emblem. In the wanderings of " *Rhea, Isis, Astarte, Ino*, or *Iona*, and *Damater*, is sig- " nified the separation of mankind. At the same time, " the dispersion of one particular race of men, and their " flight over the face of the earth, is principally de- " scribed. Of this family were the persons, who pre- " served the chief memorials of the ark in the *Gentile* " world. They represented it, under different emblems, " and called it—*Damater, Pyrrha, Mene, Selene, Argo,* " *Argus, Archas*, or *Archaius*.—In the account of the " *Argo*, we have the history of a sacred ship; the first " that ever was constructed. This truth (its being the " first) the best writers among the *Grecians* confess, " though they would take the merit of the performance " to themselves. Yet, are they obliged, to betray the " truth, and show, that the history is derived to them " from *Egypt*.——The *Arkites*, who came into *Greece*, " settled in many parts, but especially in *Thessaly*, and " *Argolis;* where they introduced their rites and wor- " ship. In the latter of these regions; they were com-

" memorated,

" memorated, under the notion of the arrival of *Da-*
" *naus*, a person, who fled from his brother *Egyptus*, in
" a sacred ship given him by *Minerva*. This ship, like
" the *Argo*, is said to have been the first construction
" of the kind. And the workman was said to be as-
" sisted in the building of it, by the same deity—divine
" wisdom.—*Danaus*, on his arrival, built a temple to
" *Iona*, or *Juno*, and made his daughters priestesses.
" The people of the place had an obscure tradition, of
" a deluge, in which most of the natives perished, and
" a few only escaped, the principal of whom was *Deu-*
" *calion*, who took refuge in the *Acropolis*, or temple.
" Those, who settled in *Thessaly*, carried with them the
" same memorials, respecting *Deucalion*, and his delive-
" rance, which they appropriated to their own country.
" —Hence, it appears, that these people had traditions,
" of the great event of the deluge, strongly impressed
" on their minds; though these impressions, afterwards,
" grew more and more faint. And it is manifest, that
" by the ship, in which *Danaus* escaped, and the *Argo*,
" one and the same vessel is designated—the ark—in
" which *Noah* and his family were preserved."——So
much for Mr. *Bryant*.

It must require a strong attachment to a particular system, to make us believe, that a relation, so much celebrated, and so generally received, was altogether fictitious and fabulous, as a piece of history; or had no foundation but in type and allegory. The concurring testimony, the universal acknowledgment of all the writers of antiquity, that such a transaction, as the *Argonautic* expedition, actually took place; the precise enumeration of personages engaged in it, the minute detail of circumstances attending it, are sufficient to satisfy us, as to the reality of the event.——With respect to the object of the voyage, some of the supposed causes, which

which I have already stated, would imply a degree of refinement, and speculation, unknown, in that age, to the gallant but uninstructed youth of *Thessaly*.—The real object of the expedition may be discovered, by its consequences. It was one of the first and greatest of the predatory expeditions, usual in that age. The *Argonauts* fought, conquered, and plundered; they settled a colony, on the shores of the *Euxine* sea, and carried off with them *Medea*, the daughter of the king.—*Diodorus Siculus*, who, in his fourth book, gives an account of the *Argonautic* expedition, as an essential part of ancient history; in addition to the desire of possessing themselves of the treasures of *Æetes*, seems to ascribe a more noble and chivalrous motive to the *Argonauts*, a wish to punish the savage cruelty of *Æetes*, and put an end to his practice of sacrificing all strangers, who were so unfortunate, as to visit his shores, or the neighbouring region of *Taurica*. This writer, by resorting to the similarity of sounds, endeavours to explain, what seems most improbable in the *Argonautic* legend. For instance, he tells us, that *Phryxus* took refuge, with his tutor, in the court of *Æetes*; that the name of this tutor was *Crius*, which signifies a ram, whence arose the fable of his being preserved by a *ram*—that the treasures of *Æetes* were deposited in a fortress, and guarded by a person of the name of *Draco*, which gave rise to the poetical representation of a golden fleece, guarded by a dragon; the *Tauric* soldiers, under the command of this personage, suggested the idea of the bulls breathing smoke and flames. It puts the *Argonautic* expedition in a new, and favourable point of view, if we suppose, that it was undertaken, for the benevolent purpose of putting an end to the cruel and inhospitable custom which prevailed, on the coasts of *Colchis* and *Tauris*, of putting to death all strangers, who arrived there; and of restraining

straining the detestable frequency of human sacrifices. Sorcery and cruelty reigned without controul, in those regions; and to put a stop to their dominion, was an enterprise worthy of the gallant adventurers; suitable, indeed, to the maxims of modern chivalry.

It appears, that many other expeditions, similar to that of the *Argonauts*, took place from the coasts of *Greece*.* The state of society and manners led to it, the nature of the country, which the *Greeks* inhabited, must have early induced them to turn their thoughts to maritime affairs; (even at this day,) the *Greeks* are the best sailors in the *Turkish* navy, indeed, the only sailors.—The exuberant population of the country, must have produced a multitude of emigrations, and piratical expeditions.—*Greece* abounds in numberless islands, and the whole continent is deeply indented by gulfs and bays, presenting, in every part, safe and commodious ports and havens; and exhibits, perhaps, a greater extent of sea coast, than any other country in the world of the same dimensions. Hence, the profession of piracy was then so generally practised, that it was not considered as reproachful.—*Homer*, who gives a picture of the manners of those times, introduces his heroes, as asking each other, without hesitation, or any design of insult, whether they were pirates. Among the expeditions similar to that of the *Argonauts*, were the unsuccessful enterprise of *Theseus*, and his friend *Pirithous*, to carry off the wife of *Aidoneus*, the king of the *Molossi*, and the elopement of *Paris* with *Helen*.

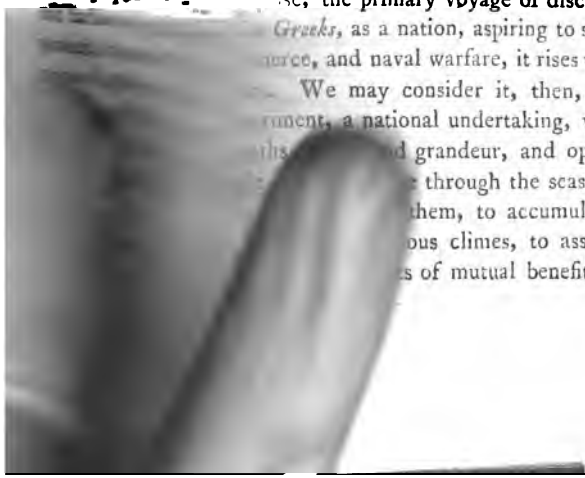
Thucydides, in the commencement of his history, says, that all the *Greeks* and *Barbarians* exercised piracy; partly to supply their absolute necessities, partly to acquire riches; and that such acts were considered

* See *Thucydides*.

as

as glorious and honourable: and thence he deduces the origin of cities, which, he says, began to be fortified on the sea coasts, for the sake of carrying on merchandize, and maintaining power; and that, as the *Phenicians* and *Carians* chiefly infested the seas, with their piracies; and not only the seas, but the maritime regions; that *Minos* fitted out a fleet, to repress their depredations. Then, descending to the *Trojan* war, after showing how much the people of *Greece* had increased, at that time, in strength and wealth, he observes, that even the famous expedition to *Troy*, bore much of the form of ancient piracy.—"Παλαιω τροπω ληστικωτερον παρεσκευ-"ασμενα."

Herodotus, in the beginning of his first book, proposing to derive the history of his countrymen, with certain deduction, from the most remote antiquity downwards, through the dark ages, to the period properly to be called historical, shows, that all the subject matter of controversy, and causes of the wars, which engaged *Europe* and *Asia* in conflict, originated in mutual acts of aggression, committed in a long series of naval and piratical expeditions, and acts of spoil and rapine, which, in those early times, were considered as themes of applause, and a source of glory. He then proceeds to particular instances; and relates, that as the *Phenicians* were the first, who tempted the seas to merchandise, and to carry on commerce, and brought their commodities for sale into *Greece;* so, he adds, they were the first aggressors, in the course of piracy, by carrying off *Io*, the daughter of *Inachus*, king of *Argos*, whom they conveyed with other captives, to *Egypt*. Certain of the *Greeks*, whose names are not preserved, (but they were *Cretans* by birth,) by way of retaliation, sailed to *Tyre*, and bore away *Europa*, the daughter of the king. A second and more formidable act of reprisal took place; when



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blazed forth in the *Persian* war, was made by the *Greeks*, in their armament under *Agamemnon*, which undertook the siege of *Troy*.—The beginning of wars usually lies much deeper, and more remote, than the immediate injury or provocation, which kindles them; or the profest and ostensible causes, for which they are waged.—There is a bitter series of silent aggravation, an occult growth of mutual jealousy, a rankling progress of dissembled injury and insult. This was manifestly the case, with respect to the war, which ended in the fall of *Troy*. The rape of *Helen*, and the wrongs of *Menelaus*, were the immediate provocation, and ostensible grounds of quarrel; but such motives could not have assembled all *Greece* in arms, if motives of private interest, or national policy, had not operated on the different states: if the way to a general war had not been opened, and prepared, by a course of preceding hostilities.—There were appropriate causes, which acted on the general mind; applied themselves to the hopes, and the fears, the jealousy, the ambition, the avarice, and resentment, of all the states, and individuals, of this heterogeneous mass; and led them to consider this expedition, as an enterprise, in which the glory, the prosperity, and even the safety, of all *Greece* was involved.

Such is the connexion of the *Argonautic* expedition, with the subsequent events of *Grecian* history, that it must be considered, as forming a necessary link, in a mighty chain. We must resort to it, as one of the original causes, introductory of the brilliant events, which distinguish the splendid history of that exalted nation. In fact, the story of this singular and romantic expedition, as it possesses more of historical verity, than is commonly supposed; so, also, is it, in itself, a more important argument, either of historical relation, or poetical embellishment, than the wrath of *Achilles*, the wanderings

wanderings of *Ulysses*, or the rage of *Turnus*, for *Lavinia disespoused*.——The farther back we trace the illustrious transactions of *Greece*, the seeds and origin of the godlike actors, and glorious atchievements of her heroic times; the more noble and interesting appears to be the theme. The vessel of the *Argonauts* seems to be the cradle of *Grecian* heroism, and chivalry. The history of those first adventurous worthies, holds, as it were, a torch, though somewhat clouded and darkened, to guide us to the true origin of the *Greek* states, and the foundations of their genuine history. From the *Argonautic* expedition, downward, the series of *Grecian* affairs is linked and connected; and becomes systematic and intelligible. It may be deduced from thence, in regular order, through the *Theban* and *Trojan* wars, to the origin of the great *Persian* war, and embraces the foundation of many of the states, kingdoms, and dynasties of *Greece proper*, not to speak of *Asiatic Greece*, and of *Italy*. The genealogy of houses began to be ascertained; the detail of facts to be defined; and something precise and solid was offered, on which the sagacity of historical research might operate, and the veracity and dignity of narration be worthily exercised.

If we consider the *Argonautic* expedition, as the first great naval enterprise, the primary voyage of discovery undertaken by the *Greeks*, as a nation, aspiring to supereminence in commerce, and naval warfare, it rises vastly in its importance. We may consider it, then, as a great public experiment, a national undertaking, which explored new paths of gain and grandeur, and opened, to a hardy people, an intercourse through the seas, with distant regions; which taught them, to accumulate in one spot, the blessings of various climes, to associate the most remote tribes, in acts of mutual benefit, and

unite and combine the opposite regions of the earth; by the arts of navigation.

It was natural, therefore, that the story of the *Argonautic* expedition, should be a grateful and popular theme of *history and fable* among the *Greeks;* not only, from the romantic and interesting details, with which it was filled, of the bravery of their ancestors, and the noble pictures of ancient manners, and heroic daring, which it displayed; but, also, for the more wise and solid national reason, that it commemorated a transaction, which was the groundwork of all those naval expeditions, which, in later ages, became the foundation of the fame and prosperity of the *Greeks.* Such a subject could not fail of exciting an universal interest; and that it really did so, appears, from the multitude of writers, by whom it was treated, from the time of *Orpheus* to that of *Apollonius;* and their reference to the names of places, and ancient monuments.

From the foregoing considerations, I am fully persuaded, that, we neither ought, with Mr. *Bryant,* to aim at allegorizing the whole story of the *Argonautic* expedition, nor ought we to receive it with scorn, and indifference, as wholly fabulous. We cannot consider, as altogether fictitious, a transaction so much celebrated, the subject, as I have already said, of so many historical compositions, and so many poetical productions. Many of these have reached us; and many more were written, which have perished, as appears from the scholiasts on *Apollonius Rhodius,* who refer to a multitude of authors, whose writings are lost, and whose very names are recorded only by those learned grammarians. Some foundation there must have been, in truth and fact, however exaggerated and disguised by fiction, to render the *Argonautic* expedition an event of such notoriety,

riety, and apparent authenticity, in history, that it became an epoch for astronomical observation, and chronological calculation, with other memorable transactions, which have never been called into doubt, as historical facts; such as the *Trojan* war,* the return of the *Heraclidæ*. We may conclude, then, that the history of this transaction is a mixture of historical truth, and legendary fables, like all the rude accounts, which are handed down to us, of the first origin, and early transactions, of all nations, as they are preserved in tradition, and popular songs. Poetry and rhyme are the first vehicles of historical record. Bards and minstrels, in the rude ages, when the arts of writing are little known, are the only brief *Chronicles of the Time*. The enthusiasm and love of the marvellous, incident to rude and early ages, naturally prone to wonder and exaggeration, disposes men to embellish the accounts of every bold and extraordinary action, with many fabulous additions; and to ascribe to magic, and supernatural agency, every thing, which seems, to their untaught minds, to surpass the measure of human strength, and reality. Thus, truth and nature are concealed, or disfigured, by a large superstructure of fiction. Yet, still, it cannot be questioned, that there is a considerable groundwork of truth, for the rhyming histories, the popular legends, and ancient traditions, that commemorate the exploits of early ages. In fact, if we substitute the fabulous beings of the *Gothic* mythology, its genii, fairies, wizards, witches, and goblins, for the deities, the nymphs, the centaurs, the sirens, and enchanters of *Grecian* mythology; the stories of the fabulous times of *Greece*, will not be found to differ very materially, in point of

* Yet, *Mr. Bryant* questions even the event of the *Trojan* war.

probability,

probability, from those of our early *British* and *Saxon* history.

Nor should the story of the *Argonautic* expedition be reprobated, as the narrative of a mere piratical excursion, a trifling predatory expedition; any more than if a *Spanish*, a *Portugueze*, an *English*, or a *Dutch* poet, were to select for his subject, one of the early maritime expeditions of his nation. What, in fact, were the first enterprises, of the early adventurers and voyagers of *Europe*, to the *East*, and to the new world?—Were they not equally piratical, and equally romantic, with those of ancient *Greece?* Were they not equally undertaken, by small bands of adventurers? Were they not equally marked by dangers, and with daring? And do they not afford equal room for the disguises of fiction, and the admixture of fable? Do not the narratives, of the different voyages of discovery, bring back, to modern times, the appearance of those illustrious and heroic piracies, of which we are told by *Herodotus* and *Thucydides?*——Men, at once robbers and merchants, rush from *Europe*, to nations inhabiting another part of the globe, unknown in situation, language, and even in name; nations, which neither had, nor possibly could have provoked them, by any injury; and, without any other motive to stimulate them, than the love of adventure, and a wild and indefinite expectation of acquiring immense wealth, they waste, they burn, they destroy. Their rapine and savage cruelty keeps pace with their dangers and heroic courage.——One poet, *Camoens*, has selected a similar argument; and adorned it so, as to make it appear highly interesting, not only to the *Portugueze*, his countrymen, but even to the poetical readers, of every other country, and of every time. And if any other poet should, in like manner, have chosen, as a subject, the maritime expeditions, and discoveries

discoveries of his countrymen, and adorned them, with all the power of genius, as monuments of the adventurous spirit, the bravery, and ancient glory of his nation; can we doubt of the song becoming popular; particularly among a people exulting in commerce, naval fame, and consequence; and enjoying the fruits of the discoveries celebrated by the poet?

We see, that the great poets of antiquity did not select their subjects wantonly, or capriciously; but, that, independent of the intrinsic merit of the fable, as an interesting story, and of the charms of the poetry, there was a certain political motive, a secret bond of connexion, and felicity of topics, that spoke to the self-love of the reader and auditor, and disposed them to take a peculiar interest in the productions, that celebrated the *Argonautic* expedition, the siege of *Troy*, the wanderings of *Ulysses*.—Such subjects came home to the *business and bosoms* of the *Greeks*. They recalled to mind their maritime expeditions, their naval discoveries, and their triumphs in *Asia*. Thus, the epic strain of *Homer* nourished, in the young bosom of *Alexander*, the spirit that attempted, and atchieved, the downfal of *Persia*, and established the *Greek* empire in the *East*.

The accounts of the *Argonautic* expedition seems to represent that undertaking, as the first maritime enterprise of the *Greeks*. This must be understood, with much qualification, as meaning only the first great expedition, the first maritime warlike equipment, or the first, that was prepared to visit such distant shores, and explore the remote regions of *Asia*. The writers on this subject, in the spirit of poetical embellishment, and the desire of exalting the character of their heroes, wished to represent as the first, what was, in reality, only the greatest naval attempt, to that time, of the *Greeks*.

What

What is said respecting *Argo*—that it was the *first ship*, that the plan of it was suggested by *Minerva*, and that it was built under her auspices, must be taken to mean, that *Argo* was the first great ship, or ship of war, perhaps the first *decked* ship, which the *Greeks* fitted out. That *Argo* was not, absolutely, and in a general sense, the very first vessel, in which the *Greeks* tempted the seas, and navigated, appears, from the tenour of history, and even from parts of the very narrative of the *Argonautic* expedition. It is plain, that there were ships in *Greece*, and that navigation was known antecedent to the building of *Argo*; since we are told, that *Phenician* merchants carried off *Io*; and that *Minos* fitted out fleets, to clear the sea of pirates. It appears, too, that *Phryxus* and *Hellè* fled from the wrath of their stepmother, in a vessel, which bore the figure of a golden ram; and that *Hellè** being sick, and leaning over the side of the ship, fell into the sea, and was drowned. We are further informed, in the relations of the *Argonautic* expedition, that the adventurers, in their voyage to *Colchos*, met the sons of *Phryxus*, at an island, where they had been shipwrecked, in their way, to *Greece*. We find, also, that the *Colchian* king, *Æetes*, had a very numerous fleet, on board of which he dispatched his subjects, to pursue the *Argonauts*; after the elopement of *Medea*.—Perhaps, too, in saying, that the *Argo* was built under the directions of *Pallas*, the poets, and early chroniclers of that transaction, only meant to say, in the tone of figurative exaggeration, that the idea of the voyage was suggested by *Minerva*, or divine wisdom. But these seeming inconsistencies may be reconciled, by admitting such qualifications of the general sense, as I have already mentioned;

* See *Diodorus Siculus*, Book IV.

and

and the most marvellous parts of the story will be rendered probable; and consonant to historical verity, by understanding these parts of the narrative, in a figurative sense, as they were truly meant; and by making due allowances, for the fictitious circumstances, which poetical embellishment, or ignorance and popular credulity, may have engrafted on ancient tradition. To the foregoing considerations, others, had I time and leisure, might be added; but, I trust, enough has been said, to persuade the candid reader, that the accounts of the *Argonautic* expedition are not only founded in fact, but true in the main; and that there is no good reason for our agreeing with Mr. *Bryant*, to resolve the accounts of this transaction into allegory and symbol. Indeed, we must be led to receive the opinions of this learned and ingenious, but visionary writer, with caution, when we find him calling in question, an event of such celebrity, and seeming authenticity, as the siege and destruction of *Troy*. An event, which seems to be established, by the concurrent voice of all antiquity; and the details of which are corroborated, and verified, by the researches of different modern travellers, who have visited the several scenes of action, for that express purpose; and employed no small care and sagacity, in exploring the present state, and appearance, of the *Troas*, and comparing them with *Homer*.*

With respect to the particular circumstances of the *Argonautic* enterprise; we are not to suppose, that this was literally the expedition of a single ship, or of fifty warriors only, proceeding to encounter the *Colchian* monarch, and the whole force of his state. To magnify the courage of those early adventurers, to render their dangers more interesting, and their atchievements

* See Chevalier *Franklin*, &c.

due

more surprising, poetical narrators have represented the transaction, as if this were the case; but, we must make due allowances, as I have before observed, for poetical licence. Whatever might have been the object of the *Argonauts*, whether to obtain the treasures, that originally belonged to *Æetes*, or to reclaim those, which had been carried away from *Greece*, by the children of *Athamas*, and either voluntarily surrendered, by them, or extorted forcibly from them, by the *Colchians*;* whatever, I say, might have been the scope of this expedition; the *Greeks* could have little prospect of attaining it, by fair means; and the strongest reasons imaginable for expecting, that they should be obliged to resort to force. We may, therefore, naturally conclude, that the extent of their preparations, and the force of their armament, must have been, in some degree, commensurate to that expectation. It gives a more dignified idea, of the transactions of the *Argonauts*; and, at the same time, it involves less of the marvellous, and is more conformable to probability, as well as to the relations of the most authentic ancient historians, to suppose the enterprise in question, a scheme of national retaliation, for a national injury, (whether the rape of *Io*, or any other outrage,) attempted, on a great scale; than to consider it, as the private adventure of a few romantic individuals, rashly embarking in a *Quixotic* conflict, with the assembled strength of a whole kingdom.

The learned *Eustathius*, in his scholia on *Dionysius Periegetes*, v. 686,† relates, that the *Argonauts* built

* That the latter might have been the motive of the *Argonauts*, is not improbable; since the account of *Apollodorus* states, that *Argus*, son of *Phryxus*, was one.

† Editio *Stephani*, p. 105.

many

many ships; and that some were separated, and wandered away from the rest of the fleet; that the captains of these vessels founded colonies. He mentions, in particular, that on board one of them were the charioteers of the *Tyndaridæ* or *Dioscuri*, who settled colonies; and that the tribes, derived from them, took the names of *Heniochi*, *Zygii*, and *Tyndaridæ*; and the region where they established themselves, was called *Dioscuris*, or the land of the *Dioscuri*, on a bay of the *Euxine* sea, the last as you sail to *Trapezus*, a famous emporium, erected by the people of *Sinope*. As his authority, for this piece of ancient history, the learned bishop quotes an historian, named *Chirax*. The names of these tribes are obviously borrowed, from the profession or occupation of their founders, or from the illustrious brothers, in whose service they were employed. The passage of *Dionysius* runs as follows.

> Ἡνίοχοι ζυγιοι τε πελασγιδος εκγονοι αἰης
> Παρ δὲ μυχον ποντοιο μετα χθονα τυνδαριδαων.

Other writers inform us, that the *Argonauts* did not terminate their voyage, at *Colchis*; but wandered over the ocean and *Erythrean* sea.—*Pindar* intimates this, in the long digression, on the subject of the *Argonautic* expedition, in the fourth *Pythic* ode.

> Εντ' Οκεανου πελαγεσσι μιγεν
> Ποντω τ' ερυθρω.—L. 445.

The scholiast of *Pindar*, third *Nemean* ode, 64, quotes *Hellanicus*, to show, that the whole band of *Argonauts* joined *Hercules*; and assisted him, in his warfare against the *Amazons*, under their queen *Melanippè*; after which, we are told—see the fourth *Pythic* ode, that these heroes, in their wanderings, reached the *Syrtes*.—There are other writers, who say, that they sailed all about the sea coasts of *Europe*.

The

The learned *Olaus Rudbeck*, not content with the account of the wanderings of the *Argonauts*, given to us by the ancients, has attempted to prove, that *Jason*, with his companions, after they had carried off *Medea*, to avoid the pursuit of *Æetes*, sailed into the *Palus Mæotis*; and, being borne into the mouths of the *Tanais*, past through a cut or canal, into the river *Rha*, now called the *Wolga*, and from thence, to the *Baltic* sea. From the *Baltic* sea, he conducts them, to the *Hyperborean* tribes, and the gulf of *Finland*; where, having arrived, according to his hypothesis, they drew their vessel on land; and proceeded, through the river *Ulense*, to the *Chronian* sea; thence, to the *Dead* sea, and the *Cimmerian* sea. He then supposes, that they proceeded to *Iernis* or *Ireland*, and through the *Western* or *Atlantic* sea, to the pillars of *Hercules*; through them they past into the *Mediterranean*, and so home to *Greece*, and the port of *Iolcus*.—I thought this geographical romance deserved to be mentioned here, were it only to show, into what absurd reveries, men of sense and learning may sometimes be betrayed. This speculation has been fully examined and confuted, by *G. Caspor Kirchmajor*, in an essay on the *Argonautic* expedition, published at *Wittcburg*, 1685.

It should seem, that *Æetes* apprehended some such attack, as this of the *Argonauts*, and prepared for it accordingly. For, we are told by *Diodorus Siculus*, whose account contains many curious particulars, that it was the practice of *Æetes* and his queen, to destroy all strangers, who visited his coasts; that *Medea*, his daughter, having exerted herself very much, to save the lives of many of these unfortunate people, became an object of fear and jealousy to her father; who suspected her of treachery, and secret conspiracy, with these strangers,

strangers, against his safety. On this account, he placed her under a sort of liberal confinement, in his palace. She, having escaped from thence, took refuge in the sacred grove of the sun, which was seated, near the sea shore. Just at this critical time, the *Argonauts* having set sail from *Taurica* by night, arrived at *Colchis*; and coasting along, in sight of the above mentioned grove, perceived *Medea* wandering on the beach. A mutual explanation, and consequent good understanding, soon took place, between the beautiful princess, and the illustrious voyagers. This ended in a solemn compact; the princess, on her part, engaging to assist the *Argonauts*, in the accomplishment of their object; and *Jason*, their leader, swearing that he would espouse *Medea*, and be faithful to her all his life. After this, the *Argonauts*, having left a detachment, to guard the grove and temple of the sun, proceeded, accompanied by *Medea*, to make the grand attempt, for possessing themselves of the golden fleece. This treasure, as we have mentioned, was deposited in the temple of *Mars*, and guarded by a band of *Taurian* soldiers, under the command of a person named *Draco*, as has been already mentioned. *Medea* is said, by historians, to have led the *Argonauts* to this temple, which was distant about seventy stadii from the city, which contained the royal palace, and, according to *Diodorus*, was called *Sybaris*. *Medea* approaching the gates by night, and finding them closed of course, called to the guards, in the *Tauric* dialect. They, knowing her voice, and recognising the daughter of their king, readily opened the gates; which was no sooner done, than the *Argonauts* rushed in with drawn swords; cut to pieces many of the soldiers; and compelled the rest, in the utmost consternation, to betake themselves to a precipitate flight. The *Argonauts* then seised the golden fleece; and, returning to the shore,

exerted

exerted themselves, with the utmost haste and diligence, to get their vessel afloat. On this transaction was founded the fable, of *Medea* having laid to rest, by inchantment, the *wakeful dragon*, that guarded the golden fleece.—*Æetes*, being apprized of what had happened, prepared, with as many of his soldiers as he could assemble, to pursue the *Greeks*. He overtook them near the shore, and a combat ensued. *Iphitus*, one of the *Argonauts*, and brother of *Eurystheus*, who imposed his labours on *Hercules*, was slain in this engagement, near its commencement. When the battle began to rage, and the *Colchians* furiously prest on in crouds; many of the barbarians, together with their king, fell by the hands of the *Argonauts;* and, particularly, by those of *Meleager;* their whole force was completely routed; and many of them were slain in the pursuit. Some of the principal *Argonauts* were wounded, particularly *Jason*, *Meleager*, and *Atalanta;* (for, as to the circumstance of her partaking in the expedition, *Diodorus*, and most other writers, who speak of these events, differ from *Apollonius*). The wounded were cured by *Medea*, by the application of certain herbs and roots. After this, the *Argonauts* proceeded to the *Troade;* and assisted *Hercules* and *Telamon*, in punishing the perfidy of *Laomedon*, whom they killed in battle; and placing *Priam* on the throne.—The whole narrative, at large in *Diodorus*, is well worth the perusal of the learned reader:* and shows, that the *Argonautic* expedition must have been, as I have said, on a larger scale, and comprehended a more regular and digested plan, of invasion and warfare, than is commonly apprehended; that the most authentic accounts of it contain nothing that shock probability; and that the exploits

* See Book IV. edit. *Steph.* p. 174.

of

of the *Argonauts* were not confined to the acquisition of the golden fleece.

It is well observed, by an historian,* "That, notwithstanding many romantic fictions, that disfigure "the story of the *Argonauts*, their undertaking appears "to have been attended with a considerable and happy "effect on the manners, and character of the *Greeks*." From the æra of this celebrated expedition, we may discover, not only a more enlarged, and a more daring spirit of enterprise, but a more decisive and rapid progress, towards civilization and humanity. The sullen and unsociable chiefs, whose acquaintance with each other most commonly arose from acts of mutual hostility, hitherto gave full scope to the sanguinary passions, which characterise barbarians. Strength and courage were almost the only qualities, which they admired: they fought, and plundered, at the head of their respective tribes; while the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts were regarded as fit objects only to excite their rage, and gratify their rapacity. But these gloomy warriors, having exerted their joint valour, in a remote expedition, learned the necessity of acquiring more amiable virtues; as well as of adopting more liberal notions of the public interest: if they pretended to preserve the esteem of their equals. Military courage and address, might alone procure them the respect of their immediate followers, since the safety of the little community often depended on the warlike abilities of the chieftain; but, when several tribes had combined, in a common enterprise, there was less dependance on the prowess of any single leader. Emulation and interest naturally rendered all these leaders, as jealous of each other, as desirous of the public applause; and, in order

* *Gillies.*

to

to acquire this applause, it was necessary to brighten the lustre of martial spirit, by the more valuable virtues of justice and humanity.—*Hesiod* marks this change of manners, "It happened between the *Argonautic* expe-"dition and the siege of *Thebes*, since the latter was "the first enterprise, in which his new race of men—"Γενος δικαιοτερον και αρειον, were engaged."*—In fact, the *Argonautic* expedition may be considered, as the crusade of ancient times. It has been observed, by various writers, what an advantageous change in society and manners was induced by the crusades; what a commercial spirit, what a refinement of the human understanding, what a noble courtesy, a superior degree of heroism and gallantry, were disseminated by those romantic enterprises. The early enterprises of the heroic ages, had similar beneficial effects. I speak here on a supposition, that the groundwork of the mythical narratives was reality, though the superstructure was much changed and embellished by fancy.

The chief points of the *Grecian* mythology and religion, and the principal events of their early history, were collected into uniform and compacted structures, forming great and solid monuments in honour of their gods;† all the scattered legends of their bards and poets were arranged and digested, and made to form a regular series of poetic or fabulous history—the groundwork of this was truth, however it might be disguised by inventive embellishments—the vanity of the *Greeks* made them receive these stories with fond admiration—

* *Hesiod, Op. et Dier.* l. 155.

† *Salmasius, in Solinum*, p. 597.—*Casaub. in Athenæum*, Lib. VII. 4.——And *Heyne, Excursus* I. *ad* Lib. II. *Æneid.*—And *De Fontibus Diodori Bipontine*, edit. of that author.

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these collections were called *Cycles*, and the authors, who related them, either in prose or song, cyclic writers.——There two cycles are particularly distinguished—the *Mythic Circle*, comprehending a complete body of fable, derived from the genealogy of the gods down to the destruction of *Troy*—the other the *Trojan Cycle*, consisting wholly of legends concerning the *Trojan* war, or arising out of it.——The *Mythic Cycle* contained the *Theogony*, or generations of the gods—the *Cosmogony*, or formation of the universe—the *Titanomachia*, or wars of the *Titans*—the *Gigantomachia*, or wars with the giants—the *Phoronis*—*Danais*—*Eea*—*Naupactica*——*Heraclea*——*Argonautica*—*Thebe*—*Epigoni*—*Alcmæonis*—*Minyæ*—*Æginius*—Capture of *Æchalia*—the Marriage of *Ceyx*—the *Amazoniad*—the *Theseid*—containing, in short, a complete body of mythology, from the marriage of *Cælum* and *Terra*, to the end of the wanderings of *Hercules*, all in a chain, and regular connected series; as we find the exploits of the times of chivalry and romance collected by *Turpin*, and formed into heroic song by *Boiardo*, *Ariosto*, and others. Respecting the affairs of *Troy*, besides the poems of *Homer*, there were many others, called "*Nosti*," or Returns.—The writers of the *Mythic Cycle* in verse, were *Arctinus*, *Milesius*, author of the *Hiopis*, *Lesches*, *Stasinus Cyprius*.—The writers of the *Trojan cycle*, were the same *Arctinus*, *Milesius*, *Eumelus*, *Lesches*, the *Cyprian* verses, to which catalogue some add *Stesichorus* and *Antimachus*.——Others—other names.—Besides these, there was the *Epic cycle*, formed by the *Alexandrine* grammarians, who collected into a body the chief ancient epic poets, as *Homer*, *Hesiod*, *Pisander*, *Panyasis*, *Antimachus*.

* See *Heyne*, *ubi supra*.

When

ESSAY THE THIRD.

ON THE

STATE

OF

SOCIETY AND MANNERS,

IN THE

EARLY HEROIC AGES.

In considering the work of a writer, who has chosen for his subject one of the most memorable adventures of the early heroic ages of *Greece*, we are naturally led, to direct some share of attention to the manners and state of society, at the period to which the action of the poem in question is referred. The reader will find many scattered observations, to this effect, in the course of the preface, the other essays, and notes; which form a part of this publication; but, I trust, he will not think a few observations, on the same subject, in a more regular and systematic form, wholly superfluous.

The manners and occurrences of the heroic ages are, in themselves, a most interesting and sublime spectacle. They exhibit to the philosopher, human nature, undisguised and unsophisticated, with the most prominent passions and faculties, in full energy and effect. All the actions, and motives of action, in that state of society, are great and prominent; original thinking, independent

pendent conduct, and daring enterprise, are its characteristic features. The sketches, taken from a prospect of mankind, viewed in this state, will be like the drawings from the naked forms of wrestlers, or the figures of *Michael Angelo:* all the muscles and sinews, all that constitutes strength, and aids exertion, will come forward, and appear bold, and in full relief.

But it is not, in a general point of view, that the nature of the present work demands a consideration of the heroic ages. When we view them with a reference to the production of a poet, as, in the present case, our attention must be directed to the *Argonautics* of *Apollonius*, we are led, to consider this subject, under an aspect, somewhat differing from the philosophical and historical views of it.——We must contemplate the state of society and manners, as far as they are calculated, to prompt and produce actions and adventures, fitted to afford subjects for the higher parts of poetry, the *Epopœia*, and the *Drama*. It is also natural for us to enquire, in what degree they are susceptible of poetical embellishment, and whether they are more capable of it, than society and manners in a more advanced state of civilization and refinement. It remains yet further, to be considered, whether there are not different passions and feelings, more particularly appropriated to different states and stages of society; and which of these, in their practical operation, as exemplified in the affairs of men, will be most likely to furnish subjects for poetry: which of them, as traced to the human heart, and exhibited, in the workings and operations of the spirit, the vicissitudes of thought, and purpose, which they occasion, are most capable of being treated with advantage, and receiving embellishment:—what are the particular branches of poetry, which are most likely to be suggested, rendered popular, or called to perfection,

perfection, by the predominancy of particular passions, and feelings; of course, what are the various species and forms of poetry, which will become most prevalent, and may be most successfully cultivated, respectively, at various periods, and in various stages, and states of society and manners.—In other words, it may be determined, how revolutions in the state of society, and changes in the manners and ways of thinking of men, naturally operate to produce revolutions in poetry.

Such considerations and enquiries, as I have mentioned, would form an interesting and entertaining section in poetical history; and conduce much to the extension of sound criticism, founded on philosophical principles, and tracing poetry to its origin in the manners and dispositions of men.——Poetry has not been sufficiently turned to the true light; or placed in the point of view, in which it ought to be considered, that of an art, which records in the most impressive manner the actions of mankind; gives a harmonized form, and musical utterance, to their passions and feelings; and reflects a living picture of the manners of the times. It is obvious, that much of the merit of such pictures, must consist in the fidelity of the likenesses; and to judge properly of this fidelity in the painter, it is necessary, that we should recur to the originals, from whence his portraits are drawn. It is justly said, by a celebrated poet,*—

"Heroic acts high raptures do infuse,
"And every conqueror creates a muse."

In the heroic ages, both mind and body are capable of the strongest and greatest exertions, the body is sinewed by toil, and daily exercise, in the most active and manly

* *Waller.*

sports.

sports. The passions are all uncontrolled and vigorous, very little restrained by laws, very little modified or subdued by decorums, customs, institutes, or dissimulation.—The ruling passions, and predominant dispositions, which then display themselves, are all of the boldest feature, and strongest tone——anger, revenge, love of spoil, lust of power, thirst of glory, ardent curiosity, the restless spirit of adventure.—Such motives as these, are likely to produce bold, extraordinary, and hardy attempts, such as seem to pass the boundaries of human strength, and outstrip the belief of human possibility. The mind and body are prepared for the atchievement of things unattainable by human force, in times, when the body is, in some measure, relaxed by luxury and indulgence, and the mind restrained by legal curbs and prudential reflections.

It must, also, be remarked, that in those rude ages, which the world has agreed to call heroic; by reason of the small restraint, that is imposed by law, on the unruly passions, and the imperfect state of government and police, which afforded few and feeble means of protection to the weak, against the inroads of the strong, acts of blood and rapine, of outrage and ferocity, were very frequent. Human nature was perpetually called forth, to suffer and to dare, in such transactions as furnish matter for the *Epos*, or people the stage with perpetrators or victims of mighty crimes, and mighty calamities.

Gorgeous tragedy,
With sceptered pall, comes sweeping by,
Presenting *Thebes*, or *Pelop's* line,
Or the tale of *Troy* divine.*

Enthusiasm is a peculiar attribute of the heroic ages. —"*Nil admirari*" may be a very useful maxim, for

* *Milton.*

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the conduct of common life, but it is a precept highly inimical to the atchievements of heroism, and the flights of poetry. The sources of information, in those ages, are too scanty, and the leisure allowed for the acquirement of knowledge, too small, to render the diffusion of arts and sciences so general, as to produce the fastidiousness of mind, and critical difficulty of being pleased, which destroy enthusiasm.—The mind uninformed and unrestrained, is prone to admiration.—Little versed in natural causes, men are disposed to magnify into prodigies those appearances, for which they are unable to account.——The love of the marvellous predominates; and this propensity will be perpetually nourished, by an abundant supply of subjects. The fewer the things, which are understood by men, the greater will be the number of those, which must appear wonderful. Man is, in every state and stage of society, a collection of paradoxes, an union of inconsistencies; and in the fabulous or heroic ages we find, a strange combination of the two kinds of enthusiasm, so different in their form, so contrary in their effects, yet, manifestly, proceeding from the same source.—The one enlarging: the other, contracting.—The one form of enthusiasm, is seen operating to elevate—the other, to debase the mind.—The one is seen producing great exploits, through grandeur of sentiment, the other an ardent credulity, under the dominion of ignorance. A high opinion in the minds of men, of their own powers, a fervid imagination, perpetually inflaming violent and uncontrolled passions, dauntless courage conceiving great things, and prompting men to attempt them, flattering and eager hope painting the distant object in colours of allurement, and unconquerable irresistible impetuosity pursuing it, without pause or remission; these are the consequences, or the inseparable marks and concomitants, of the first kind of

enthusiasm.—That enthusiasm, which makes the hero—the conqueror—the knight-errant, like *Perseus*, *Theseus*, *Hercules*, and the adventurous knights and champions of *Gothic* fable. Nor is this enthusiasm of pure elevation, which forms the hero, often found separate from the other kind, which raises the mind, by depressing it——paradoxical as the expression may seem——and forms the devotee and the martyr.

We find the preceding observation confirmed, by a reference to the poets, who describe the manners of the heroic ages. Their traditions are full of the signal punishments, reserved for impious men. Many of their most distinguished chiefs were priests, as well as warriors. All their great enterprises were preceded, and followed by religious ceremonies, and solemn appeals to the deity. And there is no part of the narrative, on which they seem to dwell, with so much complacency, as the details of sacrifices, the recital of oracles, and the description of omens, prodigies, and divine apparitions.—All this is strictly, and philosophically just, and conformable to the history of human nature.——Men, who are much conversant in dangers, are generally prone to superstition and religious enthusiasm.—This is seen in particular classes of people, whose professions are more hazardous, than those of the generality; as sailors, and people, who are employed in mines.* Such men are peculiarly credulous, and superstitious; and have certain traditionary legends, and bigotted notions, appropriate to themselves: men, who escape, as it were, by miracle, from seemingly inevitable dangers, must feel more strongly, the necessity of looking for divine protection.—And persons, who have witnessed the accomplishment of very extraordinary things, seemingly unat-

* See the notes on *Sargent's Mina*, a drama.

tainable

tainable by human force, may readily be induced, to believe in the interference of some supernatural agency.

Independent of the limited state of knowledge in the heroic ages, which must leave room for the operation of credulity and enthusiasm, the transactions, which take place in those times, are well calculated to cherish such impressions. When exploits and undertakings, apparently surpassing the bounds of mortal strength and capacity, are atchieved, the untutored vulgar, more disposed to wonder than to reason, are immediately led to account for the matter, by resorting to supernatural agency. This propensity attaches to the legends and traditions of those ages, an imposing grandeur, a mystic and awful solemnity.——The heroes of ancient *Greece*, are born and nurtured in an extraordinary manner. They are the offspring of gods celestial, of nymphs, and river gods. They are supported, or opposed, in their stupendous adventures, by deities, and a reception into the society of divinities,* is the crown of their labours. The heroes of the *Gothic* mythology are nurst, by fairies and wizards—they are defended, or opposed, by the powers of enchantment—they are in perpetual conflict with giants, demons, and necromancers—they are aided and instructed by good genii, and celestial spirits—they assail towers and fortresses, raised by magic—they are perplexed in forests entangled by sorcery.——Thus, similar is the spirit of the *Grecian*, to that of the *Gothic* mythology; because both are, in fact, a faithful transcript of nature.

The passions and feelings of men are to be considered, in two points of view; as furnishing subjects for

* Thus, *Achilles* wounds *Venus*, and combats other deities.

the muse.—First, as they produce events and historical facts, which excite such an interest, either by their being marvellous and great, or by their excellence, or atrocity, as to become objects of general and popular attention, and, consequently, fit themes for song. Or, secondly, as the passion itself, and the workings in the mind become the direct and immediate arguments of poetical comparison. With poetry, originating from this latter source, the heroic ages have little concern. The forms and kinds of poetry, which are cultivated, and please, in that period, are, like the persons and passions of the men, who live in it, of the more robust and majestic frame and feature, and of the more aspiring and bold character.—The prevalent kinds of poetry grow, naturally, out of the predominant passions, and dispositions, and the existing state of society.——The *Epos*, under which name I would include heroic tales, and metrical romances, celebrating the high atchievements of demigods and heroes, are among the first attempts of the muse.—No strains could be so acceptable and flattering, to the ears of martial chieftains, as those which extolled their own brave exploits, or recorded the military fame of their ancestors. Songs of this kind, must have been generally popular, and been preferred to all others, among people, who considered the profession of arms, as that, which alone was honourable, and were trained, and exercised, from their early years, to the trade of war.

" Such was the *Chian* father's strain,
" To many a kind domestic train,
" Whose pious hearth, and genial bowl,
" Had chear'd the reverend pilgrim's soul:
" When every hospitable rite,
" With equal bounty to requite,

" He

" He struck his magic strings,
" And pour'd spontaneous numbers forth,
" And seis'd their souls with tales of ancient worth;
" And fill'd their musing hearts with vast heroic things."

And such, too, were the songs of *Ossian*, addrest to the assembled heroes, at the feast of shells.* Lyric effusions, also, were not unfrequent—whether the song of victory resounded, after a successful exploit, or the dirge was chanted, in praise of some departed worthy. In that age of religious enthusiasm, and undissembled piety, the powers of poetry were frequently called in aid of religion, to produce solemn addresses to the deity, like the *Orphic* hymns, which are referred to the most remote antiquity, and are supposed, with some degree of probability, to be the genuine productions of the inspired bard and warrior, whose name they bear, and who shared in the *Argonautic* expedition. To compositions, such as I have mentioned, we may, perhaps, add apologues and allegories, of which we find many beautiful instances, in the poetical parts of the *Old Testament*, and in other writings of the early ages. To

* In *Denon's* Voyage, Vol. I. a picture is given, of the amusements of the soldiers and sailors, in the fleet of *Buonaparte*, not unworthy of the simplicity of the heroic ages.—" When night put a stop to these turbu-
" lent enjoyments, a bad fiddle, or worse singer, drew
" a numerous auditory.——An energetic story-teller
" charmed the attention of a groupe of seamen, with
" the prodigies of valour, and marvellous adventures,
" of *Tranche Montagne*; the hero of these tales being,
" invariably, a warrior, each of the adventures was as
" probable, as it was interesting to the audience!!"

these

these we may add, collections of moral precepts, and compilations of prudential maxims, such as the *Proverbs of Solomon*, the *Works and Days of Hesiod*. It might be expected, perhaps, that, in this enumeration, I should include pastoral poetry, and that exquisite poem, the *Canticles*, might be cited, as an instance of the high antiquity of this species of composition; but, it must be remembered, that this production came from the bowers of luxury, and amorous indulgence, *where the sapient king held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse*;—and that, although *Solomon* wrote in an early age, he did not write, in one, which was unpolished, or what we may call heroic; but, on the contrary, in times highly refined and luxurious, when commerce was exercised on a very extensive scale, when wealth was generally diffused, when knowledge was far advanced, and the sciences deeply cultivated.——We cannot argue, from the production of a refined and learned prince, writing in the midst of regal pomp, and of a splendid and enlightened court.——The *Song of Solomon* is, manifestly, the production of an advanced state of man.—A mildness of temperament, a calm serenity, a sweetness and innocence of manner, are essential to pastoral poetry: and all these are wholly foreign from the turbulent temper, and violent disposition, of the heroic ages—besides, in those times of violence and turbulence, the profession of the warrior was the only one, which was held honourable; the peaceable unassuming employment of the shepherd was despised, and, of course, his pursuits, his pains, or his pleasures, could not engross much public regard, or become the themes of a popular species of poetry. The spirit of the times required something more energetic and ardent, more expressive of the strong passions, the vigorous and unrestrained feelings, the grandeur of mind and elevation of thought,

the

the glowing enthusiasm, and disposition to admiration, which prevail in the heroic ages, and are highly favourable to exertions, in the more exalted branches of poetry.

Whatever might have been the forms and subjects of the poetry, which was popular in the heroic ages; it will readily be conceived, that it must have borne the character of the times, and consisted rather in the rapid and extemporaneous effusions, of the bard, and excursive minstrel, than the set and studied compositions of the regular poet. All the kinds of poetry, which prevail in those periods of society, will dwell on external circumstances, and rest in the events, that are the consequences of human passions and feelings. We shall not find, among the productions of such ages, many instances of works, that descend into the bosoms, and secret thoughts, of men; to analyse the passions, and delineate their workings. To do this, requires more study and reflection, more knowledge of human nature, and stronger habits of observation, joined with more skill and exactness in composition, than falls to the share of early poets, in the ruder ages. In periods, like those, to which I allude, there is much activity and little speculation. All is energy, tumult, and passion.—Things, not words, or abstract ideas, are the objects of attention. Seldom is leisure allowed, for study and meditation, and scanty indeed, is the room indulged to that kind of philosophical refinement, which makes the mind an object to itself, and turns inward, to contemplate, and mark in detail, its several workings, and the various symptoms of its operations.—The passions are then seen only in their consequences; in the events which they cause; and studied only through the medium of experience and historical tradition. They are not considered *a priori* in the abstract, or as separate from the particular, or individual, over whom they are

are supposed to have dominion. They are never traced out, in their first movements in the mind.—Thus, it is not the passion of anger, in general, which is described by *Homer;* it is the wrath of *Achilles*, seen in its effects of delaying the conquest of *Troy*.—It is not an analysis or description of the vindictive feeling in general, that we find, in the poetical legends of the heroic ages, but a display of its effects, in the murderous vengeance of *Atreus*, or the deadly fury of *Medea*.—We do not find in *Homer*, an abstract description of love, a general display of wantonness; it is love seen in the perfidy of *Paris*, and the flight of *Helen*, and producing a great historical event, by rousing the *Greeks* to war.

If we take a joint retrospect of the ruling passions, and the prevailing manners, in the heroic ages; we shall be satisfied, that even were there leisure, there could be scarcely any occasion, for the study of human nature, or profound researches into the human heart, considered in the abstract.—The passions and propensities, (for the lighter and softer emotions, which we generally call feelings, are not much seen,) which predominate in the heroic ages, are violent, and strongly marked. They are few in number, and the expression of them is bold, open, and little restrained, by manners, institutions, and decorums.—Besides, they are passions of an active operative kind, which do not spend their force in secret, but come forward, into public view, and notoriety, in their eventful consequences. Thus, the delineation of passions is not an abstruse disquisition and analysis; a philosophical detail; but an historical recital of signal events.—When knowledge is increased, and commerce diffused, when new relations of society arise, when the latent powers of the human mind are expanded, and the latent wishes of the human heart are furnished with objects, and called into action:—then,

new

new and unknown passions and feelings begin to display themselves, and the expressions and features, of passions already known, begin to be varied, by the operation of different causes. In the kinds of poetry, to which the passions, the feelings, and the manners of men, in a more advanced state of society, give occasion, the authors write more from study, and study more, to write. They proceed to consider passions, feelings, and manners, in the abstract. They trace the workings and feelings of the mind, instead of considering the emotions and propensities of a known individual, as they are manifested in his conduct. They collect the general operation of a passion, as it appears in the human species, at large. They observe the common attributes of our nature, disposing men to a certain conduct, in certain situations. They study the manners of particular classes in society; and, having thus accumulated materials, they endeavour to exhibit the result of their enquiries and experience, in some imaginary personage, and fictitious action, expressly contrived for the purpose.

As, in every point of view, the poems of *Homer* are admirable; in one respect, they are invaluable; namely, in that of having been really produced, in the heroic age, or, at least, in a period so very near, as to have admitted no material deviations from the manners and habits of the time, which he celebrates. His descriptions, therefore, give an exact picture of the state of society and manners, of the progress of the arts, and the degree of refinement, which had actually taken place. These representations, though, perhaps, less perfect and pleasing, as paintings, and, considered in a general point of view, than those of *Apollonius Rhodius* and *Virgil*, are more valuable, as faithful portraits, which afford us real historical views, of the growth of

society, and the progress of the human mind. The different actors, who are introduced in his poems, are all real personages, who existed before him, who were handed down, to his knowledge, by legendary tradition, and whose several characters were ready framed and ascertained to his hand.

Apollonius and *Virgil* wrote, at a great distance from the heroic ages; when softness of manners, luxury, refinement, and science, were at their height. The ages, in which they flourished, were wholly unlike to the heroic, in their characteristics, in all the intercourse of society, in all the occupations and pursuits of men; in their modes of thinking, and the degrees of knowledge and refinement, which they generally possest. Yet, these writers, with only polished courtiers, and men of letters, before them, for their archetypes, were led, by their choice of subjects, to depict the manners and customs, and exhibit the personages, of the early heroic ages. They saw nothing existing before their eyes, in real life, from which they could derive the ideas necessary for their representations, they were obliged to resort to their own imaginations, and to the stores of knowledge of past times hoarded in their minds; assisted by the records of historical truth, joined with the helps derived from imitation. They were reduced, to copy from the materials, which they found provided for them in the writings of *Homer*. Or, if they ventured to depart from the footsteps of that venerable and faithful guide; they were obliged to resort to fiction, and found themselves insensibly impressed and biassed, by what they had seen and heard around them. They mixed too much of their own feelings and sentiments, of the politeness, refinement, and knowledge, of their own times, with the details of the transactions of early ages, and attributed them to personages, who were supposed

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to be living, speaking, and acting, in a rude and remote antiquity. The consequence of this is a palpable departure from the *costumé* (to use the painter's term) of the times, which they profess to describe and exhibit. They introduce arts and sciences, a degree of luxury, pomp, and splendour, which were then unknown.—— They represent the bonds of society, and comforts of life, in a more forward state than they really were; and above all, they ascribe to the actors in their fables, a certain refinement of sentiment, an artificial conduct, a finesse of manner, and studied decorum, which are the consequence, and the characters, of a much greater degree of polish, and a far more advanced state of society; in fact, they fall into a moral anachronism.

There is one circumstance, in which, particularly, *Apollonius* and *Virgil* show themselves the progeny of a more refined age; and depart from the manners of the heroic times; I mean, their allowing to love such a mighty share in the fables, and predominant influence in the catastrophe of their poems; and still more, their giving such minute delineations of the passion abstractedly considered, and traced out to its secret operations in the human breast. The rank and preeminence, which are thus given to love, are not in the spirit of the heroic ages, but bespeak an age more refined, and advanced in civilization, and elegance. In *Apollonius*, for instance, there are much arrangement and dialogue, which would not disgrace the high polish and decorum of the *French* stage.——In *Homer*, though the rape of *Helen* is the avowed cause of the *Trojan* war, yet love has small share in the action; and *Paris* and *Helen* are very subordinate figures in the picture.—Indeed, avarice seems to have, at least, as much share as amorous gallantry, on the part of *Paris*, or wounded honour, and conjugal attachment, on the part of *Menelaus*.—It appears,

appears, that the adulterer carried off great treasures with the lady, Κτηματ' ἀμ' αὐτῇ—and that the reluctance of the *Trojans*, particularly that of the court of *Priam*, to disgorge this wealth, was the great obstacle to an accommodation; while the desire of regaining it, seems to have contributed to the ardour of the *Greeks*, in prosecuting the war; at least, as much as the wrongs of *Menelaus*; for we find, in every negociation on the subject of restoring *Helen*, particular care is taken to mention the treasures.——Even *Briseis*, the fair captive, whose loss produced the destructive wrath of *Achilles*, which caused innumerable woes to the *Greeks*—even she is little seen.——There are no details of the amorous feelings of the hero. He seems to be more agitated, by the keen sense of insult, and the feelings of wounded pride, than by any tender or fond attachment to his mistress. *Briseis* occupies but a few lines in the whole poem, though she furnishes occasion for the entire action of it. The hero's expressions of regard for her are energetic, indeed, but brief in the extreme; and are summed up in half a dozen words.——So, Book I. l. 167.

——" Ἐγω δ' ολιγον τε φιλον τε
" Ἐρχομ' ἐχων επι νηας."——

And Book IX. l. 341.

——" Ἐπει, οστις ἀνηρ ἀγαθος και εχεφρων
" Την αὐτῃ φιλεει και κηδεται, ως και εγω την
" Ἐκ θυμῳ φιλεον δουριδητην περ ἐουσαν."

The plain sincerity, and blunt unadorned conciseness, of these expressions of regard, are highly characteristic of the roughness and simplicity of the heroic ages.—There are much warmth and sincerity, but no parade—no abstraction.—*Hector* and *Telemachus* are represented,

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as possessing feeling hearts, great mildness of disposition, and gentleness of manners; yet, the reader must recollect the tone and expressions, in which the one speaks to his wife, the other to his mother, in the poems of *Homer*. With how little politeness, gallantry, or even common civility, they addressed the women, whom they most loved and valued! And this may serve to convince him, that amorous gallantry, refined compliments, and politeness, and enthusiastic deference to the fair sex, have not properly any place, in the pictures of the manners of the heroic ages.

—— " Αλλ ἐις ὀικον ιȣσα τα σαυτης εργα κομιξε
" Ιςον τ' ηλακατην τε, και αμφιπολαισι κελευε
" Εργον εποιχεσθαι."—*Iliad*, VI. 490.

In the first book of the *Odyssey*, see l. 345. *Telemachus* employs the very same expressions, to his mother; while he orders her, to retire to her apartment; and she submissively obeys his injunction. And the poet praises the young prince, as speaking prudently and properly, on the occasion.

" Ἡ μεν θαμβησασα παλιν ὀικονδε βεβηκει
" Παιδος γαρ μυθον πεπνυμενον ενθετο θυμω."

Yet, *Telemachus* is represented, as adorned with every virtue, and, particularly, as a model of prudence, beyond his years. Women, in fact, in those ages, were considered as occupying a very inferior rank in society. They occur, in history and fable, as the unimportant objects of a transient desire, or the helpless victims of brutality and outrage; as creatures formed for the accommodation of man; as things rather to be possessed and enjoyed, than courted and admired. In those times of toil and warfare, strength was the great test of perfection, the great pledge of superiority. The people, in-

in those ages, knew not any of the illusions of love. They regarded women as inferior beings, because they were weaker than themselves; and the young men, as soon as they had attained the age of virility, assumed a tone of superiority, even to their mothers. This is, every where, the natural sentiment of a rude age. Among the modern savages of *America*, whose manners and occupation much resemble those of the ancient warriors, in the fabulous times of *Greece*, love engrosses little of their thoughts. The attachment of the men to the females, is, comparatively speaking, but cold and slight; and they devolve, on the feebler sex, the laborious task of cultivating their land, and the menial office of attending on the warriors.—The *Russians*, too, who are still far behind the rest of the people of *Europe*, in civilization, think that women are destined by nature, to be placed in the humblest submission to them—they speak to them, in a tone of imperious superiority—they exact from them the most servile attention, and defference.—*Rousseau*, in his sketch of the manners of the inhabitants of the *Pays de Vaud*,* gives a similar picture of the state of subordination, in which the females were held. Such manners are the natural result, as I have said, of rude unpolished feelings, which ascribe an extraordinary degree of superiority, to superior animal strength; and dispose the strong, to abuse their force, and employ it, to oppress the weak.

The ancients, in those heroic times, seem to have had little confidence in the virtue of their women. For we find, it was not even a subject of reproach, for a son to doubt that of his mother.—*Telemachus* says to *Pallas*, who visits him, in the shape of an old man named *Mentes*—"My mother tells me, that I am the

* *Nouvelle Heloise.*

"son

"son of *Ulysses*. For my part, I must take her word "for this—no person can be certain, that he knows his "true father."—A prince, or young nobleman, who, in more polished times, should speak thus irreverently of his lady mother, would be thought rather a graceless youth.—Yet, these words are put, by the faithful painter of ancient manners, into the mouth of a person of exalted birth, instructed and guided by the goddess of wisdom.——The whole address of a lover, in the moment of passion, to the most charming object of his affections, is in *Homer* very blunt and concise, and sufficiently gross and uncouth.

"Νωι δ' ἀγ' ἐν φιλοτητι τραπειομεν ἐυνηθεντε."

Such is the elegant compliment, which *Jupiter* pays to *Juno*, after she has borrowed the cestus of *Venus*, to render herself enchanting.—The reader may also turn to the conclusion of the third book of the *Iliad*, where *Paris* returns vanquished from the combat, with *Menelaus*, and is bitterly reproached by *Helen*.—Instead of the tender jealousies, the amiable and interesting contests of lovers, and of those sweet reconciliations, which furnish the poets, of more refined ages, with such delightful subjects; we are presented with a conversation, and scene, coarse and indelicate in the extreme; such, indeed, as would be in character, between a modern serjeant, in a marching regiment, and his camp mistress. —We find nothing of this kind in *Apollonius* or *Virgil*; the sentiments are dignified and refined, decorum is every where preserved.

It is not surprising, that the men of those times should have been gross in their manners; and uncouth in their expressions. Even the women, in the heroic ages, showed little of the delicacy, the reserve, and attention to decorum, which have marked their sex, in

ages

ages of greater refinement. Indeed, not only the women, but even the goddesses, make no secret of their inclinations. They condescend, to offer the first advances, to the favourite objects of their choice.—In the *Odyssey*, *Ulysses*, having drank, with impunity, the poisons of *Circe*, as the enchantress is in the act of raising her wand, to transform him into some obscene animal, draws his sword, and rushes upon her. The goddess, struck with surprise, at this bold action, recognises him, as the hero, whose arrival had been foretold to her by *Mercury*, and addresses the prince in these terms.—

" Or art thou he, the man to come foretold,
" By *Hermes* powerful with the wand of gold;
" The man, from *Troy*, who wander'd *Ocean* round,
" The man, for wisdom's various arts renown'd?
" *Ulysses*, oh thy threatening fury cease.
" Sheath thy bright sword; and join our hands in peace.
" Let mutual joys our mutual trust combine,
" And love, and love-born confidence, be thine."—
Pope's Homer.

In fact, no monument of high *Grecian* antiquity, (says an ingenious *Frenchman*,) shows us love, accompanied by all the charms, in which imagination, rather than reality, has attired it.——To find those charming and finished pictures of love, we must pass to the age of the *Ptolemies*, who called the elegant arts—the refined pleasures—and polite letters, into *Egypt*, to the city founded by *Alexander*.——In the *Greek* tragedy, love is professedly painted but once, and that is the fury of an incestuous passion.——We cannot recognise love, when we perceive the absence of its characteristics—the cares—the complacencies—the respect, and deference to the beloved object.——When these are wanting, all that remains

remains is a mere animal impulse, a gross instinct, brief, ignoble, and uncertain.

The present enquiry, into the prevailing manners, and predominant passions, in certain stages of society, is merely made, with a reference to their influence on poetry.—It is manifest, that in poetry, founded on the transactions of the heroic ages, love, if the manners of those ages are faithfully preserved, can properly have but little share: and that love can occupy but a subordinate department, in the productions of those poets, who, like *Homer* and *Hesiod*, actually live, and compose their works, while the manners of the heroic ages yet prevail.—The fair sex is chiefly introduced, in its weakness and calamities, as an object of violation, or a cause of war.—The stern rugged natures, of those early hunters, agriculturists, and warriors.—Their constant occupation in a life of danger, toil, and activity, afforded little room or leisure, for those piping arts of peace—the sentimental part of love was then unknown, the poetry exclusively consecrated to the celebration of the gentle passion, was a stranger to their ears. Love is the favourite child of luxury and idleness, and these two sources of this delightful, but enfeebling offspring, were little known, in those ages, when habit *made the flinty couch of war the thrice driven bed of down.*—Toils of the body are, on many accounts, an effectual preservative, against wanderings of the mind, and, particularly, against the soft infection of love.

While the mind is occupied, by the toils, or the wants of the body, it is little disposed, to lose itself, in the abstractions of ideal enjoyment. In the state of society, to which I allude, the intervals between labour and necessary repose, are commonly brief, scarcely more than nature will demand, for food and necessary refreshment. Thus, in the life of constant activity and exertion,

exertion, which men universally led in those days, engaged, as they perpetually were, in the chace, the toils of the field, or the pursuits of war, they found but little leisure, to think on love, to soften their hearts, by meditation on the charms and attractions of beauty, or recollections of the pleasures formerly enjoyed.—When a religious festival, a plentiful harvest, or a signal victory, brought with it a longer pause than ordinary, from laborious employment, and a season of festivity and relaxation, all the sports and amusements, of the men of those times, were such, as bore some reference, or resemblance to war; as throwing the javelin, hurling the disk, and dancing in their armour, or listening to the song of bards, who celebrated the exploits of departed heroes. The two sexes, also, lived much separated from each other, and, in general, pursued their respective amusements apart. It may, therefore, well be supposed, that, in such a state of society, imagination and fancy would have little force, or influence. Yet, these are the prime incentives, that cause love to predominate, as an occupation of life, as a permanent passion, ruling and triumphing in the mind. These are the seducers, that inflame the desires, of the more polished races of men, with their sweet illusions, their fairy creations, of more worth than any realities.

In addition to the power of mere occupation, and the want of leisure, to preclude thought, fancy, and imagination, it is certain, that in a frame, hardened and confirmed by perpetual toil, great muscular exertion, and exposure to all the vicissitudes of rigorous seasons, the sensibility of the nervous system must necessarily be diminished, and the body rendered less susceptible of the feelings of pleasure, or pain—the mind less capable of ideal refinements, and the visions of delight, that cherish love, in the bosom of ease. Love, considered

as

as a ruling passion, permanently and generally extending its empire, depends much more on moral, than on physical causes. The incitements of the senses are brief and interrupted; the illusions of fancy, the maddening influence of fond abstractions and amorous ideas, decking the beloved objects, in imaginary graces, and allurements perpetual and unwearied.

Another cause, which precluded amorous sentiment, and the prevalence of love, as a passion, engrossing the time, and employing the mind, in a permanent manner, during the ancient heroic ages, was the facility, which men experienced, in such periods of society, of gratifying their desires. The wishes and inclinations of men become ardent, from opposition. What was, at first, but an instinctive impulse, a propensity, a slight inclination, by a series of obstacles is rendered a furious predominant passion, an irresistible bias, a care, a business of life. The difficulty of attainment collects all the thoughts, and attentions, and fixes them on the object of our wish. The good, or the enjoyment delayed, assumes new attractions, viewed through the medium of doubt and delay; like distant objects, seen through a mist, it appears greater than the reality.—— Want of reserve and delicacy, are ever unfriendly to the sentiment of love; and the women of those times were commonly but little burdened with either. Their manners were coarse, their minds artless, they were little acquainted with decorums, and total strangers to hypocrisy and dissimulation. They met the advances of their lovers *nothing loath*. They spared them the suspense, the cares, and the delay of a long and vexatious courtship. They frankly avowed their wishes; nay, in many instances, they anticipated their lovers, in the declarations of a passion. Did the fair, in some few instances, prove coy and reluctant;—where persuasion failed,

failed, force was called in to her aid. Thus, the legends of the heroic times abound in stories of the violences and outrages offered to the persons of women; and it is, from the prevalence of such transactions, that the custom arose, among those early heroes, of ascribing their birth to deities. It is also observable, that, in the ancient catalogues of names, distinguished in those ages—of the *Argonauts* for instance; and of the *Grecian* and *Trojan* worthies; who were most conspicuous, in the attack and defence of *Troy*, a great proportion are stated, by the poets, to be the progeny of illicit love.

The prevailing manners of those periods were unfavourable to love, on this additional ground—a certain delicacy of manners, a gallantry, consisting in respectful motions of the characters, and respectful behaviour towards the persons of women, and a general deference to the softer sex are necessary, to spread and maintain the dominion of this tender but capricious passion.

Men, who lived in those ages, must have accompanied the severe toils, and the rough pursuits, in which they engaged, by a proportionable roughness, and brutality of manners, highly unfavourable to condescension or tenderness for the fair sex.—The pride of strength, the constant demand for its exertions, the honours and advantages, which attended the possession of it—all these must have induced men, to consider relative weakness, as an absolute inferiority of nature; and to despise softness of mind, as characteristic of weakness of frame, and, consequently, degrading to the manly character.—Love, that refined and noble passion, which elevates the mind, and exalts it above all selfish cares, which purifies the heart and affections, and views the beloved object, with an adoration, somewhat approaching that, which we pay to the divinity, is then unknown;

or,

or, were it known, would be treated with scorn and derision, as weakness and folly. *Paris*, who certainly was, in every respect, an accomplished gentleman, and had a great deal of the spirit of modern gallantry in his composition, is treated with much contumely, on this score, by his brother *Hector*, who yet is represented as a mild and courteous character, considering the times in which he lived, and as gentle and humane.—Δυσπαρις γυναιμανες ηπιροπευλα.—Those early heroes decried love, as an effeminate weakness, unworthy of a warrior, then the most dignified of all characters. They would have thought themselves debased, by the sacrifice of their time to such pursuits. The intercourse of lovers was little diversified—it afforded few incidents—it occupied a small portion in the thoughts and attentions of men—it bore no proportion to the other business of life—it seemed like a small speck or blot, in the records of human action.

The introduction of commerce, wealth, and luxury; of the fine arts; of learning, elegance, and refinement; of greater leisure; yet new occupations and objects; of more varied distinctions, in dignities, honours, and ranks in society; and of widely diversified situations in life; of new relations between man and man, gave birth to new feelings and emotions; or rather furnished new materials and incentives, which called into action, and expanded passions, propensities, and talents, which had hitherto been torpid, and contracted in the bosom. Love, ambition, avarice, as marking the spirit of peaceable accumulation, in opposition to the spirit of hostile rapine, began to show themselves. The bodies of men, as well as their manners and their minds, were softened. And ease and affluence, wealth, indulgence, and satiety taught them, to refine on their pleasures; to seek out new sources of enjoyment. Then,

various

various arts—poetry, music, and painting, were addrest to the imagination; called out the sensibilities and emotions of the mind, acted on the external senses, and taught mankind, to feel with more force, the attractions of beauty; and what, to the cultivated and elegant mind, are yet more powerful, the influences of tenderness, delicacy, and grace, the spiritual allurements of the fair sex. The rude plenty, and gross inordinate repasts, the mighty continuous chine, and entire boar, and the deep potations, of the robust and hardy warriors, gave place to more delicacy and fastidiousness, in the choice of aliments; to a more exquisite refinement, in the pleasures of the table; to an exclusion of excess, with an increase of social enjoyment. At the same time, a variety of causes intervened, to render the arrangements, that lead to a union of the sexes, more troublesome, more tedious, more liable to doubts and jealousies, and more subject to obstacles.—While the causes are multiplied, which strew the path of the lover with thorns, and, at the same time, allure him to proceed; which augment desire, while they lengthen out the process of courtship; love is rendered a more serious business; it occupies more of the thoughts, the time, and attention, and more frequently seises and engrosses the fancy, the talents, and the industry. It takes the name and semblance of warfare.* It is filled with stratagem and adventure. Women begin to act a more distinguished part, on the stage of life; and the softer passions, and the attractions of the gentle sex, assume a more decided, a more extensive, and eventful influence, over human conduct.—Love becomes, more and more, the subject of poetry. It engrossss a considerable share of the *drama;* and furnishes a regular

* *Ovid* says—Militat omnis amans habet et sua castra cupido.

department

department for the lyric, the pastoral, and elegiac muses.—Commerce, wealth, and luxury, by introducing greater inequality of ranks in society, of consequence, render the union of lovers, less easy to be effected. Prudential motives, and regard to riches, birth, and station, begin to predominate.——The marriage bond becomes a more solemn, deliberate, and important engagement. At the same time, the female character and manners undergo a considerable change. That forwardness, which used boldly to avow a feeling, and meet the lover half way, disappears; and in its place arises the modest reserve, conscious of the dignity of female nature, *which would be woo'd, and not unsought be won—not obvious nor intrusive, but retir'd.*——The feeling of decorum, the sense of feminine honour, arising from the preservation of chastity, the dissimulation of the tender sentiment, even to the beloved object, the sweet reluctant amorous delay, the flight that allures, the coldness that warms—all these become the characteristics of women; and bring, in their train, the doubts, the delays, the solicitudes, the aspirations, the arts, the learning, the policy, and the warfare of love.

In a more advanced and regulated state of society, the subjects, proper for heroic poetry, may become less frequent, but, in return, new forms of poetry arise—the dramatic, the satyric, the epistolary.——The lyric and elegiac, which in some degree are known, even in the rude ages, are carried to an higher degree of polish and perfection.—Men begin to refine on their pleasures; and their minds are expanded to receive intellectual enjoyments. The fine arts are cultivated, as a source of innocent luxury, and elegant voluptuousness, a dignified mean, between the grossly sensual, and purely spiritual. The taste and feelings are not now left, to wander wild, and abandoned to their own efforts.

Learning

Learning and philosophy come to their aid; and the art of criticism is understood; and laws and rules for regular composition are devised. New passions and feelings are developed. New forms and combinations of society arise; that open a much wider field to poetical imagination; and offer a much greater choice and variety of subjects, to the ingenuity of writers.—It is, when amusements and relaxations begin to be invented, and the muses are sought out,* as desirable handmaids, that minister to the pursuits of pleasure; that dramatic poetry, for instance, appears with all its adjuncts of theatric pomp and scenic decoration, which can scarcely be known in ruder times, prior to the introduction of elegant life; not to mention, that this is a species of composition, which requires more study and contrivance, than fall to the share of writers in the infancy of poetry. Satire is the progeny, of a state of society so much advanced, that the various talents, propensities, and characters of men, begin to develope themselves; and are more extensively diversified, by the variety of ranks, pursuits, and occupations; and by a free, peaceable, and general intercourse of man with man. The intelligent observer is then predisposed, to remark on them, and finds greater facilities for making the necessary remarks. It is obvious, that all the lighter kinds of poetry, which, to the grave reader, may appear but as an ingenious kind of trifling, as the sonnet, the madrigal, and the epigram, will be produced, by some learning, much leisure, a gay fancy, and a heart at ease; and, of course, have little place, amidst the gloom and roughness of the stern unenlightened heroic ages.—The men of such times, are strangers to deep reflection and

* The ancient mysteries form no exception to this remark.

abstract

abstract reasoning. We cannot, therefore, expect, to find among them the poetry, which descends into the secret recesses of the bosom, to analyse the passions, and represent their workings; which gives body to thoughts and actions, and bids them, as well as external objects, and events, become the subjects of poetry; while, instead of dwelling on individual portraits, those who write, begin to aim at the instruction of their species at large, they extend their views, and abstract their contemplations.—They collect, from a more enlarged commerce with life, and experience of human dealings, a comprehensive knowledge of the attributes, and tendencies of human nature, in particular situations. They become acquainted with many of the details of moral science.—They acquire general views, and a systematic knowledge, of the incentives, the symptoms, and the expressions of the passions.—They begin, to select, and to combine.—They begin, to exhibit pictures of ideal excellence, as objects of imitation; of imaginary depravity, overcharged by a well-meant exaggeration, as warning examples, of the deformity of vice and criminality.—They study the manners, of some particular class, description, or rank of men; and having amassed a sufficient collection of materials of this kind, they endeavour to exhibit the result, in some fictitious personage and action, expressly contrived for the purpose.—But, these are reflections, which would lead me wide from the purpose of this essay.——To pursue the secret connexion of criticism with morals; to trace the passions, feelings, and manners, prevalent in different æras, states, and stages of society, to their varied and extensive influence, on literary composition, would be a task far exceeding the measure of my abilities, and the bounds of an essay of this nature. More immediately connected, with the subject before us, is the

consideration of a surprising phenomenon, which was reserved for the heroic ages, of more modern or *Gothic* times; I mean, the institution of chivalry.

What I have said, with respect to the heroic ages of *Greece*, would apply to similar periods of society, in general; did it not happen, that the modern, or *Gothic* heroic ages, exhibit a paradox, which certainly departs from all that has hitherto been advanced by me. This admirable and wonder-working institution it was, by which men were restrained from outrage against their neighbours, in times of outrage; and the oppression of the weak, by the strong hand, was stayed; not, by moral precepts, but through the operation of new and instinctive impulses;—not, through the power of reason and reflection, or the regulated dominion of conscience, but, by the force of passions artfully directed, and through the influence of habit.—Thus, the rash and inconsiderate courage of those times, the presumptuous pride, the love of war, the love of fame, the love of novelty, the spirit of adventure, all receiving a new direction, afforded a new bulwark against outrage, a guarantee against the violence and atrocities, incident to the barbarous manners, and martial spirit of the times, and to the unsettled state of society. It, then, became a point of honour, to spare the unarmed, the weak, and defenceless; to reverence old age; and to protect the female. The feeble were preserved, from the tyranny of the strong, by the new spirit. The man of violence and blood, the oppressor and spoiler, was sure of being assailed in his fortress, by gallant adventurers, roused to the enterprise, merely by the fame of his injustice and cruelty. He was magnified by popular rumour, by legends and traditions, into a giant or enchanter, whose castle was raised by magic, whose dungeons overflowed, with the blood of human victims. It became the entire care and occupation, of a number of the bravest warriors,

riors, to exert themselves, for the maintenance of peace, and social order; to clear the world of monsters; to protect the traveller on his way; to preserve the pious and aged pilgrim, or the tender and beautiful virgin, from rapine, impiety, and lust. There were some instances of this disposition, in the early heroic ages of *Greece*, in the persons of individuals, like *Theseus* and *Hercules*: but it was in the *Gothic* heroic ages, that it became general and systematic.—"Then (in the words "of *Robertson*) to check the insolence of overgrown "oppressors; to succour the distressed; to rescue the "helpless from captivity; to protect or to avenge wo-"men, orphans, and ecclesiastics, who could not bear "arms in their own defence; to redress wrongs, and "to remove grievances, were deemed acts of the highest "prowess and merit. Valour, humanity, justice, cour-"tesy, and honour, were the characteristic qualities of "chivalry. To these were added religion, which min-"gled itself with every passion and institution, during "the middle ages, and, by infusing a large portion of "enthusiastic zeal, gave them such force, as carried "them to romantic excess. Men were trained to "knighthood, by a long previous discipline; they were "admitted into the order, by solemnities no less devout "than pompous. Every person of noble birth courted "that honour; it was deemed a distinction superior to "royalty, and monarchs were proud to receive it, from "the hands of private gentlemen."*—It is not the business of this essay, to fully enquire into the causes, which gave birth to this singular institution, in which (as *Robertson* says) valour, gallantry, and religion, were so strangely blended.—The general prevalence of the feudal system, which, though it was a state of perpetual

* *Robertson*, *Charles* V. Vol. I. p. 70. *Dub.* edit.

war, rapine, and anarchy, and exposed the weak and unarmed to insults and injuries, yet, contained in itself the germs of redress and reformation; inasmuch, as it bound the lord, and proprietors of territory, by the most solemn ties, to protect their tenants and retainers, contributed to this, in some measure. The introduction of *Christianity* contributed to this extraordinary institution, still more. *Christianity*, as then practised, was characteristic of the times. It was carried to an enthusiastic excess. It was marked with all that ardent passion, and outrageous vehemence, peculiar to the age. Pilgrimages to remote shrines, were favourite acts of devotion, in those days, and were recommended to persons of all ranks and ages, in both sexes, by their strange power of uniting piety and pleasure. These expeditions were not unattended by danger, in those ages of turbulence, when the police was very imperfect, and all the roads were beset, with bands of armed robbers. To forward and protect the pilgrim, on his journey of grace, became a favourite occupation, for the courage and enterprise of young and gallant warriors; and great merit and reputation were attached to such services.—But the grand source, of the chivalrous spirit of the age, were the *Crusades*, the offspring of an ardent devotion, acting on a martial race, filled with restless turbulence, a love of novelty, and a spirit of adventure.—"That same disposition, which prompted so many brave and noble personages, to take up arms, in defence of the oppressed pilgrims in *Palestine*, incited others, to declare themselves the patrons and avengers of injured innocence, at home. When the final reduction of the *Holy Land*, under the dominion of infidels, put an end to these foreign expeditions, the latter, was the only employment left, for the activity and courage of adventurers."

"adventurers."*—Be the origin and the effects of this institution what they may, by introducing a refinement of manners, and a spirit of courtesy; it gave occasion, to a more marked and respectful deference, for the fair sex; from which, in time, originated amorous gallantry, uniting love, with the image of war, in tilts and tournaments—the predominance of love, as a general ruling passion—the cultivation of erotic poetry, as a distinct branch of literary composition.

The foregoing observations were suggested, among many others, on a rapid view, of the heroic ages, under a particular aspect, namely, with a reference to poetry, the only point to which we have occasion to turn our attention, in this essay.—The substance of what has been advanced tends to show, that some particular species of composition naturally grow out of particular states of man, and stages of society; and, that the passions, the pursuits, and manners, that prevail in the heroic ages, furnish, exclusively, the occasions, the materials, and subject matter, of certain kinds or branches of poetry, and lead, or determine men, exclusively, to the cultivation of those branches:—while other walks of poetry remain wholly unthought of, and unexplored, like countries as yet undiscovered; because the sentiments, feelings, emotions, and situations, about which they are conversant, and which are destined to become their subject matter, when called into existence, have not yet appeared among men; and, also, because, with the occasions, which call for writings of these kinds, men want the talents, and the leisure, which are requisite to bring them to perfection.

* See *Robertson, Charles* V. Vol. I. p. 69, 70. *Dub.* edit.

ESSAY THE FOURTH.

ON THE

GENIUS AND CHARACTER

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

In considering the genius and character of *Apollonius Rhodius*, we are not left to the testimony of ancient writers, disguised either by favour or dislike; or to conjectures drawn from small remnants, and mutilated fragments.—Were we left to adjust the claims of *Apollonius* to reputation, merely by the traditions of ancient critics, he would rank lower than he deserves; but an entire epic poem of this author, considerable in its length, regular in its plan, polished by the last cares of the writer, has fortunately been preserved to us, and furnishes a sufficient exemplification and test, of the genius and spirit of *Apollonius*. In this work, he has been occasionally led to exert his powers, in various strains and kinds of writing—the great, the terrible, the impassioned, the tender, the pathetic, the amatory, the graceful and elegant, the moral, the argumentative, and the descriptive—by his success in these exertions, must his genius as a writer be estimated.

When

When we attempt to appreciate the rank and character of *Apollonius*, it will appear, from a recurrence to the few circumstances and incidents of his life, which have been transmitted to us, that his genius was highly cultivated by education and study; and that, while most of his beauties were wholly his own; his peculiarities, or what may now be considered as his blemishes, are to be ascribed to the place of his birth, to the course of his education, and a certain style and manner, which he found already established, in the *Alexandrian* school of poetry, by his master *Callimachus*, and other eminent writers.

The circumstances, which, in concurrence with innate talent, and a peculiar cast of thought, conformable to the peculiar temperament and constitution of the person, tend to give a decided tone and character to the productions of a writer, are the course and tenour of early education, and the situation and circumstances of life, in which he may afterwards be placed. In these respects, *Apollonius*, with the exception of his contest with *Callimachus*, seems to have been as much favoured by fortune, as he had originally been gifted by nature; and in him every attribute, and incident occurred, that is requisite to the formation of an accomplished poet. He was born in a country where genius was honoured, and its exertions cultivated, not only by barren praise, but substantial rewards; in his time, every department of art, and every branch of science, was studied, and improved, with the greatest assiduity; his youth was formed by the example and precepts of a most eminent scholar, and consummate master, in the art of poetry; he had full access to complete treasuries of all the learning that the age afforded.

When we come to consider the poem of *Apollonius Rhodius*, we may trace the following excellencies—a knowledge

knowledge of the human heart, and a display of the feelings——powers of exhibiting the impassioned, the tender, and pathetic—a certain retired and chaste majesty, not unaccompanied with a genius for producing the great and terrible—an elaborate and romantic invention, such as bears more traces of poetical device, and approaches nearer to the fictions of romance, in modern times, than most of the compositions of antiquity—a spirit of elegance and refinement, in sentiment and manner, something more *recherché*, and removed, from common apprehension, at the same time, that they are recognised to be perfectly conformable to nature—a graphical distinctness, and accuracy of description—a precision in representing both spiritual and material nature—argumentative and declamatory powers—a chastised and musical ear, producing an uncommon sweetness and pomp of numbers—a curious felicity of expression; and elegance of diction—descriptive powers—the appositeness and beauty of his similitudes.

It must be confest, that, in certain particulars, *Apollonius* is something of a mannerist; as were all the writers, of the school, to which he belonged. The objectionable peculiarities, which may be discerned in him, by the eye of censure, are these that follow:—his learning sometimes betrays him into parade and affectation, degenerates into pedantry, and produces obscurity—his picturesque talent, and graphical precision, are sometimes carried to excess; and pass into a minute accuracy, and superfluous detail of circumstances, that become tiresome.—His inventive talent may, sometimes, in the opinion of many, have past into a romantic wildness, and extravagance, that suit the province of fable, rather than the sober majesty of the epos.*—His gran-

* As the circumstance of *Argo* speaking, the story of *Talus*.

deur, sometimes, becomes obscurity; and he has indulged himself, too much, perhaps, in a certain majestical gloom, in the description of religious rites, ceremonies, and an allusion and reference to the mysteries of an occult mythology.—His attention to the harmony of versification, may have led him to sacrifice sense, in some instances, to sound, and to croud his lines with a number of proper names, merely to flatter the ear.—His choice of language may sometime be pursued, to a high pitch of refinement, with an excessive degree of solicitude, that becomes affectation, and betrays the writer, into a certain verbiage, and a wearisome multiplicity of epithets.—We may observe, in *Apollonius Rhodius*, as well as in the other writers of the *Alexandrine* school, a sort of solemn mysticism, that abounds in far-fetched epithets, and in terms and expressions taken from the rituals of worship, and the forms of pious observances.

Egypt, at the time when the *Alexandrine* school flourished, boasted of a line of learned, liberal, and accomplished princes, wholly unexampled before, and unequalled since that period. The fortunate writer, whose destiny seated him at *Alexandria*, saw every where science cultivated, and every liberal and ingenious art pursued, through all its branches. Elegant converse, opulence, ease, and leisure, free access to a magnificent library, where all the volumes of genius and learning, then known to the world, were assembled; and a museum, where all the productions of art and nature were deposited; the labours of the painter, the statuary, the sculptor, the architect, displayed around, with an unsparing hand; a learned and intelligent population; a polite, accomplished, and splendid court; a literary and munificent sovereign:—all these concurred, to promote learning,

learning, and foster talent, by example and encouragement, by rewards and patronage. The best exertions of the muse were called forth; while the poet found himself an esteemed and honourable character; and the tone and style of the times, produced among men of genius an active and productive emulation.

Considered in every point of view, *Egypt* was a most extraordinary region.——The standing miracle of the *Nile*, whose overflowings fertilized the country.—The high antiquity claimed by the *Egyptian* people, who boasted to have flourished, in arts and arms, in religion, and regular polity, long before most other nations, that afterwards became famous, had an existence.——The profound veneration, with which *Egypt* was regarded, by the philosophers, sages, and legislators of the whole civilised world, as the cradle, in which the arts and sciences had been nurtured; or as the sacred fountain-head, from whence the nations of the earth had been irrigated, by the streams of religion, morality, wisdom, and learning; has rendered the country peculiarly interesting at this day.——*Egypt*, in fact, was considered by the great luminaries, who profest to guide and enlighten mankind, by laws and institutions, as the land, which it was absolutely incumbent on them to visit, before they proceeded to the task of public instruction; as we may see in the lives of *Lycurgus*, *Orpheus*, *Pythagoras*, and *Plato*. *Greece*, in particular, was indebted to *Egypt*, for her arts, her civilization, and her learning. Even *Homer*, the great father of poetry, seems to have there imbibed most of the various information, and extensive knowledge, which are displayed in his writings. He speaks familiarly of *Thebes*, and her hundred gates.——*Egypt* presented, on every side, vast and stupendous objects, to fill the imagination, and awaken

enthusiasm

enthusiasm—those ancient and gigantic monuments, her pyramids, her catacombs, those vast and awful repositories of the dead; her labyrinth, her massive palaces, and temples, her colossal statues, her obelisks, her canals, and lakes, that seemed to be the labour of more than mortal hands; her art of embalming, that prolonged the presence of the deceased; her monuments, that, even in days of the most remote antiquity, were referred, such was, even then, their ancient date, to an unknown, or uncertain, and fabulous origin.—Such was *Egypt*, and such her circumstances.—It is easy to judge, how favourable a residence, in such a country, must have proved, to that enthusiasm, which is of the very essence of poetry.

There were other particulars, in which a residence in *Egypt* was calculated, to excite solemn thoughts, and fill the mind with enthusiastic phantasies.——The venerable ancient traditions of the *Egyptians*—their use of hieroglyphical representations, and mysterious emblems, such as, at this day, cover the walls of the venerable ruins, that remain of the ancient edifices of the *Egyptians*—the number of the priests—the variety of their religious rites and ceremonies—the awful and profound nature of the mysteries, which were celebrated with studied pomp, and at which the elect were called to assist; many of which were, in process of time, adopted from them, by the nations of *Greece*—the sublime and metaphysical theology of the *Egyptians*—their deep disquisitions, their grand and uncommon notions, their allegorical precepts, respecting the cosmogony, and other philosophical subjects, notions, and precepts, which were borrowed by *Orpheus*, the great introducer of the rites of the heathen worship, among the *Greeks*; and who was in such request, that he obtained, by way of

of eminence, the name of the THEOLOGER.*——The effect of all this was, to produce in the mind of the *Egyptian* student, a love of the dark and awful—a spirit of refining, and wandering in sublime metaphysical visions, and allegorical reveries. We see much of this turn, in the writings of *Plato* and his followers; and it is well known, that he stored his mind, and enlarged his imagination, by travel and study in *Egypt*. It is particularly said, that in *Egypt* were preserved the columns, on which *Hermes* is reported to have inscribed his learning; and that *Pythagoras* and *Plato* both read them, and took their philosophy from thence.†

An education in *Egypt* must also have predisposed a writer to genealogy, historical tradition, the origin of religious rites, and the detail of sacrifices, and pious ceremonies.—They were presented to him perpetually; they were appropriate to the style and manner of the people; they were grateful to the general taste, and interesting to the readers of the day. Accordingly, we find an abundance of such passages, not only in *Apollonius*, but in *Callimachus*, *Lycophron*, and other writers of the *Egyptian Greek* school.

It was a necessary result, too, from the circumstances of the country, and the character of the people, that the writers of the *Egyptian* school should have abounded in learning, and been fond of displaying it; for such was the tone and disposition of the people, and the time. All the accounts, which have been transmitted to us of the *Egyptians*, show, that, from the earliest ages, they pursued, and cultivated, with success, the

* An epitome of the *Orphic Cosmogony*, was made long ago, by *Timotheus* the geographer.—See *Universal History*, Vol. I. octavo edition.

† See *Ancient Universal History*, title *Egypt*.

various

various branches of divine and human learning.—Geometry is agreed, on all hands, to have been first found out in *Egypt*.——Arithmetic, also, was diligently cultivated; and it appears, from the writings of *Diophantus*, that a kind of algebra was, in later ages, known in that country. It is generally supposed, that astronomy, also, was an invention of the *Egyptians*, who, by reason of the constant serenity of the air, and the flatness of the country, might observe the heavenly motions earlier, and with more ease, than other people. To them, too, the science of physic is said to have owed its original; and anatomy was early cultivated by them, to which a knowledge of the custom of embalming contributed. The *Egyptians* were also particularly famous, for the science of magic; which was reputed to have been invented by *Hermes;* and was professed by their priests, and sacred scribes.——Such was the general scientific turn of the nation; and it naturally produced a scholastic turn in its writers, sometimes, perhaps, bordering on pedantry. It produced, in readers, a degree of critical severity, a spirit of refinement, and fastidious accuracy of taste.

In addition to these circumstances, it is to be observed, that there were others, under the *Ptolemies*, that must have produced an extraordinary degree of refinement, in sentiment, language, and style. An unexampled degree of opulence, and refined luxury, a most extensive commerce, and an immense confluence of strangers, from all countries, to the capital—a magnificent court, where invention was perpetually employed, to carry splendour and elegance to a height superior to any thing the world had witnessed before, and which realised all the visions of the most sanguine fancy. A satiety of enjoyments produced a fastidiousness in pleasures. The mere sensual gratifications gave way to intellectual

intellectual enjoyments, courtly manners, a more noble and correct style of conversation, and a suitable diction prevailed.——The eye was more sensible of grace and beauty.—The ear was more awake to harmony.—The tongue was refined, and attuned, to the most correct expressions, and the most melodious sounds; while, at the same time, the conceptions of the mind were ennobled, and raised above the trite and vulgar, the mean and gross.——Such effects we might naturally expect;—nor will these expectations be disappointed, in a perusal of the refined productions of the *Alexandrine* school.—I hope the reader will excuse my dwelling so much on these circumstances; as a due consideration of them seemed to me necessary, for a right understanding of the peculiar genius and manner of *Apollonius Rhodius*. Let us now proceed, to apply the foregoing general observations, in a more particular manner, to the subject before us, by a brief review of the poem of our author.

But, before we commence this examination, it may not be amiss, to observe, that the *Alexandrine* poets were, in one respect, peculiarly circumstanced, and had an opportunity of drawing inspiration, from the highest and purest sources, from wells of poesy undefiled, even from the sacred scriptures. The translation of the *Old Testament*, which is commonly known by the name of the *Septuagint*, was executed, by the commands of *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, under the directions of *Demetrius Phalereus*, as we are informed by *Aristeas*, who was an officer of the guards to this prince. There were great numbers of *Jews* resident* in *Alexandria*; and that they

* According to this account, after *Ptolemy Philadelphus* had finished his fine library, and stored it, with the

they were in a high degree of credit and estimation may be collected, from the circumstance, that one of their nation, *Aristobulus*, was advanced to the honourable and confidential trust of being preceptor to the future sovereign of the country.—*Ptolemy Physcon.*—*Callimachus*, and the other *Alexandrine* poets, might have had access to the treasures of the sacred scriptures, through the medium of the *Greek* translation; and thus obtained an acquaintance with the poetical parts of the bible, which, from the sublime images, in which they abound, and the dark predictions, which they contain, are well calculated, to make an impression on the mind, and excite both a poetical spirit, and a certain mystical enthusiasm.—*Milton* imbibed much of his poetical sublimity, from the sacred fountains of *Hebrew* poetry.—In every part of his two great poems, we trace the spirit of divine song. He himself exults in the aid he derived from these sources, and speaks of the inspiration arising from religious sentiment, and an acquaintance with the sacred volumes, in a pure enthusiasm of holy delight.

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the most valuable books, he was told the *Jews* had one, containing the laws of *Moses*, and the history of the people; and being desirous of a *Greek* translation of it, he applied to *Eleazar*, high-priest of the *Jews*; and to engage him to comply with this request, promised to set at liberty all the *Jews*, who had been imprisoned by his father *Ptolemy Soter*. *Eleazar* sent an exact copy of the *Mosaic* books, in letters of gold, and six elders from each tribe, in all seventy-two—who, under the inspection of *Demetrius Phalereus*, executed the translation, according to some accounts, of the *Pentateuch*; but, according to the generality of writers, of all the *Old Testament*.

— "Muse,

—— " Muse, that on the secret top
" Of *Oreb* or of *Sinai*, didst inspire
" That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
" In the beginning, how the heav'ns and earth
" Rose out of chaos. Or if *Sion* hill
" Delight thee more, or *Siloa's* brook, that flow'd
" Fast by the oracle of God."——

" Taught by the heavenly muse, to venture down
" The dark descent."——

" Thee, *Sion*, and the flowery brooks beneath,
" That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow
" Nightly I visit."——

—— " Thou, celestial light,
" Shine inward."——

" O for that warning voice, which he who saw,
" Th' apocalypse heard cry in Heav'n aloud."——

—" Descend from Heav'n, *Urania*, by that name,
" If rightly thou art call'd, whose voice divine,
" Following, above th' *Olympian* hill I soar'd,
" Above the flight of *Pegasean* wing—
" The meaning, not the name, I call for thou.
" Nor of the muses nine, nor on the top
" Of cold *Olympus* dwell'st, but heavenly born," *&c.*

I could with pleasure multiply instances, for it is a delightful task to quote *Milton*, but, probably, it is unnecessary to quote any passage to illustrate what is generally known.—*Milton*, as will be seen hereafter, had a marked predilection for the writings of the *Alexandrine* school. Their works resembled his, in the hallowed majesty, the pious enthusiasm, the sublime spirit of devotion, the awful solemnity, and mysterious dignity they breathed. They added the fervour of religion to the rapture of poetical imagination.——It is probable, that

that these writers had availed themselves, of the opportunities which were presented to them, of studying the *Scriptures*; and had, like the great *English* poet, drank in much of their inspiration, from these wells of life, these more than mortal strains, dictated by divine spirit. I shall have occasion, in the progress of my notes on *Apollonius*, to point out particular passages, which favour this supposition. Such are the exalted notions of the Deity, the grand conceptions, the sublime ideas, and the bold and magnificent figures, which we meet in the *Scriptures*, particularly in the poetical parts of them. Such an awful stamp do they bear of mysterious truth, that we may easily perceive with what force, and commanding interest, they must apply themselves to the feelings, and to the imagination, of the real poet. We know the effect they produced, on the serious and religious mind, and the pure and dignified genius of *Milton*, ever aspiring to high and holy conceptions.—The coincidence, in point of time, also, is worthy of notice; and furnishes an additional reason for supposing, that the *Alexandrine* writers, particularly *Callimachus*, and *Apollonius Rhodius*, could not have been unacquainted with the *Greek* translation of the *Scriptures*.—That work was executed by the interpreters, in the reign of *Philadelphus*, and at his desire, and was placed by him in the *Alexandrian* library. *Callimachus*, therefore, who flourished in the reign of that prince, and still more *Apollonius*, who was by some years his junior, must have seen this work.——*Apollonius* could not but have seen and read it, since it was deposited, in the library of which he was the keeper; and it is not to be supposed, that a man of his learning could have overlooked such a literary curiosity.

We have seen, what advantages of art and education were offered to *Apollonius Rhodius*, for the improvement of

of his natural endowments, by the being set in the fair and fertile soil of *Egypt:* nor were these advantages offered in vain.——In the work of this admirable poet, we every where trace the hand of a master. Every thing marks the presence of care and taste, the union of science, and the graces; and shows the learning of genius, and the genius of learning.—*Domus tota residet.*—Much is great and noble, yet all around is laboured and polished, with as much diligence, as if every thing were little. The language and expressions of *Apollonius* are always chosen, elegant, and happy. His epithets are uncommon, yet apt; studied, yet not pedantic; poetical, yet not obscure.* He delineates in a phrase; he paints and colours, in a single expression. At the same time, *Apollonius* possesses in versification a regulated march, a most learned and studied rhythm. He employs the artful cesura, the varying pause, the judicious selection of smooth and well-sounding polysyllables, with peculiar care; and produces a sweetness, elaborated with more than chymical subtlety; a majesty and harmony of numbers, exquisitely attuned, and adapted to captivate the ear of feeling; such dulcet and harmonious sounds, as *take the prisoned soul, and lap it in Elysium.* The censurers of our poet might discover, that his desire of correctness, sometimes, but surely it is seldom, betrays him into affectation in his language; his love of splendour, into fastidious pomp; and florid ornament, into a multiplicity of epithets, and a luxuriant and plethoric redundancy of language——a certain pleonastic copiousness. And, while the charms and artifice of his versification are felt and confest by all, the severe critic may haply discover, that the pomp of his numbers is

* Some exceptions there may be; but this is, in general, strictly true.

rather

rather too uniform; that voluptuous and unvaried sweetness palls on our ear; that the mind is recreated, and the attention relieved, by contrast; that, to be duly tasted, sweetness should be varied, by occasional roughness; and dignity and grace set off by judicious sinkings, and artful deflexions, from the common rules of composition.

The peculiar genius of *Apollonius*; the great, appropriate, and characteristic attribute; the circumstance, in which he surpasses most writers, consists, particularly, in a certain graphical delineation; a picturesque distinctness, of imagination, and conception; a natural display of circumstances and actions, clearly arranged and combined in the mind, and fully and perspicuously pourtrayed, in narration, with apt and appropriate incidents, in select and expressive terms. The graphical and picturesque talent, of our poet, appears, in the same kind of excellence, which has been ever admired in the author of *The Seasons*, and is also observable in the writings of *Sterne*. He catches the exhibition of the moment. He views the scene, or the transaction, which he means to introduce, with an accurate and circumstantial internal vision, clearly and distinctly laid out, in the true colours, if I may so say, on the retina of the mind's eye, as if they had been grouped and depicted by a skilful painter of portraits, history, or landscape. He gives us an accurate and natural selection, and accumulates, and groupes together, more than are commonly found united, though they are presented to us, in the face of nature, and daily occur to the observer in real existence, of local circumstances.—A lively and interesting detail of appropriate incidents, of looks, and gestures, makes you fancy, that you are on the spot.—You partake in the transaction. You have the several actors before your eyes. It is not mere narration, it is

action

action and reality.—*The *Argonauts* are seen launching their vessel.——We assist at their sacrifice.——We join their banquet.—We hear the solemn strains of *Orpheus*.—We share in the dance around the altar, to the music of the lyre.——We feel, how justly the strokes of the oars, in accord with the strains of the divine musician, are compared to the steps of the dancers, beating the ground, in measure and cadence.——What a noble and animating picture is presented to us, by the first ship proceeding majestically under sail—the gods and goddesses looking down with admiration from heaven—the mountains crouded with wood nymphs, assembled to enjoy that rare spectacle, and *Chiron* with his wife advancing into the surf, and presenting the young *Achilles* to his father *Peleus!*—†We see the fishes thronging after the vessel, allured by the harp of *Orpheus*.—‡We are present in the assembly of *Lemnian* women, when the aged *Polyxo* advances to speak. The battle‖ with the giant race, near mount *Dindymus;* the account of their appearance, as they lay slain on the beach; the combat between *Amycus* and *Pollux*, are perfect reality.—We enter the mansion of blind *Phineus;* we sit beside his hearth.—§We feel the relation of the sufferings, and the miserable appearance, of the unfortunate prophet.—We see the onset of the harpies; and the long pursuit of the winged brothers.—**The representation of the justling rocks, in all their terrors, and the perilous transit of the *Argonauts* between them.

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* See Book I. v. 365 to v. 538.
† See Book I. v. 569 to v. 669.
‡ See Book I. v. 989 to v. 1011.
‖ See Book II. from the beginning to v. 100.
§ See Book II. v. 178 to 295.
** See Book II. v. 555 to 605.

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*The death of *Idmon*.—†The *Acherusian* promontory.—‡The court and palace of *Æetes*.——‖The exquisite and well-known picture of night, in the third book.—§The meeting of *Medea* and *Jason*, at the fane of *Hecatè*.—**The nocturnal rites of *Jason*, and the tremendous apparition of *Brimo*.——††The splendid and majestic appearance of *Æetes*.—The preparations for the appointed trial.—The dreadful forms of the bulls breathing flame.—The conflict of *Jason* with the monsters.—Their subjection.—The operation of ploughing the allotted space, and sowing the dragon's teeth.——The growth of men in arms from the furrows.—Their destruction in various forms, set before our eyes in living colours.——‡‡The departure of *Medea*, from the palace of her father, in the beginning of the fourth book.—Her passage through the city, by night.—Her reception at the ship, are exquisite paintings.—‖‖The whole account of the nuptials of *Jason* and *Medea*.—The sacred cave.—The assemblage of rural nymphs.—The heroes listening to the delightful strains of *Orpheus*, and guarding with their brandished spears, the entrance of the cavern consecrated to love.—The admiration of the nymphs at the golden fleece.—That fleece spread over the lovers, and fragrant veils extended round

* See Book II. v. 817.
† See Book II. v. 730 to v. 747.
‡ See Book III. v. 220, *et seq.*
‖ See Book III. v. 743.
§ See Book III. v. 966, *&c.*
** See Book III. v. 1200 to v. 1222.
†† See Book III. v. 1270, *&c.*
‡‡ See Book IV.
‖‖ See Book IV. v. 1762, *&c.*

them.

them.—Altogether present the most *riant* and animated picture, that can be imagined.——*The description of the *Syrtes*, and the *Lybian* wilds.—The distress of the *Argonauts*, and the women.——The appearance of the *Heroines*, or tutelar nymphs of the place.†——The account of the horse of *Neptune*—of the dragon *Ladon*, which had guarded the apples of the *Hesperides*, being slain by *Hercules*, and lying dead‡—of the form and deportment of *Hercules*.—‖The death of *Mopsus*.—— These may be selected, from an hundred and an hundred passages, as examples, to show the unrivalled descriptive powers of *Apollonius*; as illustrations of his genius as a painter poet; of the talents, of the mind, judicious, at once, to elect and combine the attributes and accidents of objects, and the circumstances of actions; of graphical delineation, and distinctness of picturesque imagination, and conception.

To this department of the praise of *Apollonius* belongs the consideration of the aptitude, the illustrative beauty, the happiness of his similitudes.—The near approximation of remote objects—the surprising coincidence of things apparently discordant, excites a degree of wonder in the mind, in which consists much of the pleasure communicated by an ingenious similitude. The love of knowledge, which is unwearied in the mind of man, and the love of novelty, its concomitant, which is one of our strongest emotions, are gratified, by the tracing out the resemblance of things, which, at first glance, seem

* See Book IV. v. 10, *et seq.* Book IV. from 1125 to v. 1160.

† See Book IV. v. 1260 to 1330.

‡ See Book IV. from v. 1395 to 1450.

‖ See Book IV. from v. 1500 to 1536.

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to be unlike, by the bringing together objects, which, it should appear, were originally designed by nature, never to meet. Nor is an obvious and general resemblance, in some coarse feature, or in a single particular, of things, in other respects dissimilar, as of an edifice and a mountain in bulk, of a man and a lion in fierceness, of a horse and a bird in swiftness—sufficient to constitute the beauty of a simile: the resemblance must be composed of circumstances, not so obvious, at the first glance; of circumstances not appertaining to all of the species, in all possible circumstances, but to some individual of it, placed in some particular circumstance of act and situation; for this gives a force and point to the illustration, a truth and vivacity to the painting. Nor must the comparison be left in generals, else its impression will be faint, it will illustrate nothing; it must be pursued, and driven home; it must be detailed, through the circumstances of resemblance; that it may inculcate and impress a living picture; that it may aptly illustrate the action, or object compared, by exhibiting clear and precise ideas to the mind of the reader. In tracing these circumstances of remote resemblance, much of genius consists; in seising and exhibiting them, with grace and propriety, consists much of the talent of a poet. The more the mind is stored with ideas, the more it has viewed nature and art, in their various forms and combinations, the more facilities will it possess, for the attainment of this branch of poetic excellence. In this aptness of appropriate illustration, in the novelty, beauty, and complete resemblance, or, as it may be called, poetical integrity of his similies, *Apollonius Rhodius* stands unrivalled. In most of his compositions, there are a peculiar neatnese and dexterity, a happiness and originality. To this the stores of various knowledge, with

with which his mind was furnished, contributed, in an high degree. But, to these he added a pervading genius, an intuitive perception. Some instances of this excellence will be pointed out, in the following paragraph; and it will be further exemplified, in the progress of this work, when we come to trace some of those passages, in which succeeding writers have imitated the beauties of our author.

What can be more beautiful and natural, more tender and pathetic, than the comparison of the plaintive mildness, and soft sorrows of *Alcimede*, on the eve of parting from her son, and sinking under a weight of grief, to a helpless little girl, opprest by a cruel stepmother, and clinging to her nurse.—The comparison of the fishes pursuing the charming strains of *Orpheus*, to flocks following the steps of their shepherd, while he goes on piping before them, is highly just and illustrative.—Bees are such an extraordinary and interesting race, so assiduous in their industry, so ingenious in their labours, so wise in their economy, so useful to man in their productions, that it is no wonder, their nature and properties, should equally engage the attention of the poet, and the naturalist. Accordingly, we find more poetical comparisons, and allusions, drawn from bees and their occupations, than, perhaps, from any other given subject. *Apollonius* has two fine and original similies, drawn from this source, and applied to illustrate subjects widely different, yet both highly apposite and expressive. In the first book, the *Lemnian* women crouding from the city, in swarms, and clinging to the young and beautiful *Argonauts*, with tender moans, and plaintive murmurs, are, with great felicity, com-

* See Book I. v. 269.

† See Book I. v. 575.—See v. 879.

pared to bees pouring from a hollow rock, with murmuring sound dispersing themselves over the meadows, and fastening each on some chosen flower. On the other hand,* the *Bebrycians* flying in crouds, with confusion and terror, before the *Argonauts*, after the death of *Amycus*, are, with equal propriety, resembled to bees driven from their hives, by the smoke of sulphur, and flying away, in a sort of wild stupefaction.—The comparison of the giants lying slain in their ranks, to tall trees lying felled in rows.—That† of *Hercules*, raging for the loss of his favourite, to an infuriate bull, are noble and expressive.—How beautiful, and, at the same time, how contrasted, are the two fine similies, in the second book,‡ where *Amycus* is compared to one of the *Titans*, and *Pollux* to a shining star! How illustrative the one, of the bulk, the strength, the pride, and brutal ferocity of the monarch; the other, of the youthful grace, and beauty, of the son of *Leda!*—The exquisite comparison of the agitated heart of *Medea*, to the solar spectrum, dancing on the surface of water,‖ appeared so strikingly beautiful to *Virgil*, that he has made it his own, by adoption.§—The furious pattering of hail, against the roofs and walls of houses, crouded together in a city, is aptly employed, to give a notion of the incessant rattling noise, of the vollies of pointed quills, which the birds of *Mars* darted down, on the shields and helmets of the *Argonauts*.——What can be more admirable, than the comparison of *Jason* appearing in all the bloom of youth and beauty, for the ruin

* See Book II. v. 130.—Book I. v. 1003.
† See Book I. v. 1265.
‡ See Book III. v. 38.—Book III. v. 755.
‖ See Book II. v. 1085.
§ See Book III. v.

of

of *Medea's* future peace and reputation, to the fatal brightness of *Sirius* darting malign influence, and shining to destroy.—I might accumulate more instances, to show the transcendent skill and excellence of *Apollonius*, in this branch of the poetic art, but I believe sufficient have been adduced, to convince the reader, that my praise of his picturesque talent is not exaggerated. To point the attention to passages, where he may trace the luminous display of appropriate attributes and incidents clearly conceived, and previously arranged in the mind, and happily and forcibly exprest.

As the very perfection and consummation, of the graphical or picturesque talent in *Apollonius*, which crown and place him in the foremost rank, as a painter poet, we find in him a most lively perception of delicacy, beauty, grace, and loveliness in form, in action, and in sentiment; an imagination peopled with the silphid apparitions, and ethereal creations, of the fair, the gentle, and the decorous.—To conclude, this head, our author possessed a clearness and distinctness of perception, which caused him to view all objects, physical and moral, with a discriminating eye, and a perfect and retentive intelligence; thus was his mind stored with a variety of the most clear and luminous notions, the most perfect and representative ideas. The things, which fell within his experience, were not viewed by him generally or confusedly, like objects seen at a distance, or through a mist: he contemplated them, in all their attributes, members, and varieties; he discriminated their species; he caught their proper incidents, destinations, and characters.—Thus was he enabled to present things to his reader, with such distinctness and accuracy; such strength of design, and truth of colouring; such a vivid appearance of nature, as very few poets have attained.—His mind was like the tablets of

a judicious painter, filled with faithful studies after nature; and from his storehouse he drew the selection of local circumstances of description; the lively and circumstantial detail of appropriate incidents, of looks, and gestures, that place us on the very spot—that set the different actors before our eyes—that hurry us into the midst of the affairs, in which they are engaged.

As striking instances of the perception of beauty and grace, we may notice three different descriptions of *Jason*, illustrated, as the descriptions of *Apollonius* always are, by apt and beautiful similitudes.——The description of the young hero, passing to the place of embarkation, in which act he is compared to *Phebus* proceeding to some of his favourite haunts.—His hasting in all the splendour of beauty, and youthful grace, to meet the *Lemnian* queen, in the first book; and to meet *Medea*, in the third.—In these three descriptions, the materials of the poet, the fundamental circumstances, of youth, beauty, grace, and amiable appearance, are the same; yet, the poet has employed them, with such art, has so varied the positions and combinations, that there is no sameness in the descriptions themselves.—The address of the author is particularly conspicuous, in this respect, that he sends the hero twice to a tender assignation; he compares him, in both instances, to a star, yet the two descriptions have nothing else in common; they are both wholly new, wholly original, and excite ideas wholly different in the mind.—The forms of *Calais* and *Zetes*—*Pollux*, preparing for his combat with *Amycus*—the deportment of *Jason*, and the *Colchian* princess, when they place themselves, at the hearth of *Circe*, are pictures worthy of the hand of a *Guido*.

The power of selecting and combining circumstances being joined with a picturesque sense, and descriptive faculty, and exercised on a subject so well adapted to them.

them.——The various incidents, in a voyage through unknown seas, and to many distant and unexplored regions—the reader is carried, from country to country; the face of the soil, and the manners of the different inhabitants, are described, in the most lively and natural colours; his attention is never suffered to languish; and a quick succession of interesting objects is presented to him, in a moving picture. Nothing dwells too long on the sight, but the scene is perpetually shifting. We accompany the heroic band—we pass, with them, through the most imminent perils—we are presented with the most romantic adventures, and the narrative is carried on, with such spirit, that we cease to be readers. The imagination warms, and we seem to become actors.—Thus, the poem of *Apollonius* excites the same kind of interest, and communicates the same species of rational pleasure, which are found, in the perusal of well-written books of travels. Thus, the author contrives to encrease the delusion, of seeming reality, and, at the same time, takes occasion to mix instruction with amusement, by introducing the ancient traditions, of history and religion—by tracing out the origin of states, and marking the customs and manners of remote tribes and nations. In the *Odyssey* we find the same excellence, and feel a similar interest excited by it; but the action of the *Argonautics* is more important, and better adapted to awaken curiosity; and the sketch of countries and nations, which is presented to us in it, is more rapid, and more diversified. How amusing are the details, which he gives us, of the manners and customs of the *Chalybes*, the *Tibareni*, the *Mossynæci*, and the *Colchians*; how amiable the picture, which he presents, of *Alcinous*, his consort, and the hospitality of their court.

I have dwelt more at length, on this graphical or picturesque talent of *Apollonius*, because, in my apprehension,

hension, it is that, which is most peculiarly his own, and distinguishes him, in a supereminent degree, from other writers. In fact, the power of realizing, by natural selection, and minute, circumstantial, and local description, has not been possest by many writers.—I proceed, now, in my examination of this fine poet, and the more minute and critical is the attention paid to him, the more shall we be convinced, that he possesses all the requisites of a great master in his art; and that nothing can be more palpably unjust, than the sentence, which would degrade him to the class of mediocrity.

We must remark in *Apollonius* that faculty, which is the chief and principal ingredient in the composition of the true poet, which gives life and existence to all his other attributes—a fertility and copiousness of invention, a brilliancy, a clearness, and originality of imagination. How unjust, then, to consign to mediocrity, the writer, who shows the sportive range, and commanding ken, of a felicitous and inexhaustible fancy, teeming with all its golden dreams and divine fictions, producing an exhibition of gay and splendid pictures and imagery, a tissue of wild and romantic incidents and adventures.

To support the truth of this character, the fine description of the appearance of *Cybele*, and the ground becoming fertile, and the wild beasts fawning at the presence of the goddess*—of the appearance and story of *Phineus*, and the pursuit of the harpies.—The invocation, at the commencement of the third book, and the machinery of *Venus* and her son.—The dream of *Medea*.—Her magic.—The rising of the earth-born brothers from the new-ploughed land.—The descrip-

* See Book I. v. 1110.

† See Book II.

tion

tion of *Circe*, and her strange attendants.—Her vision.—The descent of *Iris*.—Her messages to *Thetis*, *Vulcan*, and *Æolus*.——The active intervention of *Thetis* and her nymphs.—The fable of the *Sirens*.—The description of *Libya*.——The appearance and transformation of the *Atlantic* nymphs.—The apparition of *Triton*.—The beautiful vision of *Euphemus*, and the production of the new island—may be cited as full proofs of the inventive powers of our author.

Although the genius of *Apollonius* may seem to indulge itself most, in reveries of delight, in the pursuit of grace and beauty, in those passages, where the gay, the sportive, and the fanciful, predominated; yet, we shall find his muse equal to the noblest flights of sublimity and grandeur.—We find in him many of the noblest and greatest conceptions.——We are struck with passages, which compel us to acknowledge, that, when he pleases to exert himself, and put forth his strength, he is not inferior to any writer, ancient or modern, in the powers of displaying the solemn, the magnificent, the gloomy, and the terrible.—Examples of his vigour and sublimity may be found, in the sailing of *Argo*, while the gods look down from heaven, with admiration.‡—In the rage of *Hercules*, for the loss of his favourite.‖—In the noble description of *Glaucus*.§——In the description of *Amycus*, and his combat with *Pollux*.**—The description of the closing rocks; of the ship rushing through them; and of *Pallas* speeding the

* See Book III. *passim*.
† See Book IV. *passim*.
‡ See Book I.
‖ Ibid.
§ Ibid.
** See Book II.

flight

flight of the vessel—is an instance, at once, of circumstantial and exact delineation, and of sublimity, greatness, and terror.*—What can be more sublimely dreadful, more horribly great and appalling, than the passage, where the *Argonauts* are described, as sailing near mount *Caucasus*, seeing the vulture slowly descend, hearing the shrieks of the tortured *Prometheus*, and viewing the bird of carnage on his return.†—Equal in gloomy majesty, and terrific greatness, is the descriptions of the nocturnal rites prescribed by *Medea*, and the appearance of *Brimo Hecatè*, in the third book;‡ and of the manner in which *Medea* destroys *Talus*, in the fourth.

To these we must add, the power and mastery of the pathetic; in which *Apollonius* has had no superior, and not many equals. Whether we find him painting the fond solicitudes, the tender hopes, and fears of love; and tracing the progress and growth of passion, in the enamoured breast; and exhibiting the war of contending passions, the painful conflicts, between inclination and duty.—Whether he describes the perils and sufferings of heroic worth and daring—expresses the emotions of tenderness, sorrow, and despair—or pourtrays the untimely and afflicting catastrophe of the brave, the young, the illustrious, the wise and good.—We find him in full possession of every key, that can unlock the avenues to the heart.—The description‖ of the aged and infirm *Æson*, sinking down in his bed of sorrow, under the weight of years and afflictions.—The affectionate and melting address of *Alcimede*, at parting from her son *Jason*, and the tender and beautiful com-

* See Book II.

† Ibid.

‡ See Book III. v. 1192—1223.

‖ See Book I. v. 262.

parison

parison, by which it is introduced—the whole episode* of the *Lemnian* women, and particularly their parting from the *Argonauts*, and the farewel speech of *Hypsipilè*. —The unhappy death† of *Cizycus*, and the tragical fate of *Clitè*, his young and beautiful bride.—The sufferings of *Phineus*.—The death of the gallant and virtuous *Idmon*, in the second book.‡——The murder‖ of young *Absyrtus*, and particularly the circumstance of his blood sprinkling his cruèl sister, as she turned aside her eyes, in the fourth book.——The parting of *Medea* from her home.§——The circumstance of her leaving a lock of her hair, for her mother.——Her affecting expostulations,** with *Jason*, and the leaders of the *Argonauts*, when she became apprehensive of their giving her up to her offended father.—The description of the mournful end†† of the pious and interesting augur *Mopsus*.— All these are passages, of such genuine and exquisite pathos, that the reader must be insensible, indeed, who can peruse them, in the original, (I fear my translation will give but a faint idea of their merit,) and refuse to their author, the praise of possessing full power over the *sacred source of sympathetic tears*. It would be a superfluous task, to dwell, particularly, on our poet's excellence, in the delineation of the passion of love; or the admirable exhibition, which he has given, of the changeful wish of *Medea's* troubled thought.‡‡—This

* See Book I. v. 610, *et sequentes*.
† See Book I. v. 1030, *et sequentes*.
‡ See Book II. v. 817.
‖ See Book IV. v. 446.
§ See Book IV. v. 10—70.
** See Book IV. v. 350, *et sequentes*.
†† See Book IV. v. 1500—1536.
‡‡ See Book III. *passim*.

part of *Apollonius* has received its full measure of praise, and been the admiration of the reader of taste and feeling, in every age. The highest and the noblest panegyric on these passages, the truest test of their intrinsical beauty, and supreme poetic excellance, are their having excited the admiration, and engaged the imitation, of such an exquisite master in the art of poetry, as *Virgil*. And justly did they engage; since the parts, which he has derived from his *Greek* prototype, are those, which charm and interest us the most, in his admirable poem.

With the powers of exhibiting the impassioned and pathetic, *Apollonius* possessed a consummate knowledge of human nature, a complete insight into all the workings of the bosom—into all the plaits and foldings of the human heart; together with a perfect acquaintance with characters, and a happy facility of unfolding and exhibiting them.—The deep penetration and experience in human nature, and the power of reading the secrets of the heart, are manifested, in the artful conduct* and reserve of *Hypsipile*, as to the true circumstances of the massacre at *Lemnos*, and the dexterous suppression of those circumstances, which were most likely to excite abhorrence. In this, the author consults probability, decorum, and human nature. He takes care to tell us, that the *Argonauts* supposed that the young queen had succeeded to her father, in the ordinary course of nature; intimating, that, had they known the truth, they would have fled abhorrent. The whole detail, of the rise, the progress, and circumstances, of the fatal passion of *Medea* †—the conflict of contending passions in her bosom—the reserve, the diffidence, the conscious

* See Book I. v. 655.

† See Book III. v. 603.

shame,

shame, and artifice, of *Chalciopè* and *Medea*,* mutually fearing, yet desiring, to entrust each other with a dangerous secret, and each, respectively, aiming and contriving to draw a sister, into an act of rebellion and treachery against their father.—The demeanour and conversation of *Medea* and *Jason*,† at their first interview.—The changes of purpose in *Medea*,‡ previous to that interview—her determination to poison herself, and then the love of life returning, and painting the charms of nature, and the joys of existence, in the most gay and amiable colours—the care of the princess, to adorn her person for the first meeting.——All these, particularly the interview between *Medea* and *Jason*, are in the highest perfection of poetry, combining a thousand beauties, uniting various excellencies—the tender, the pathetic, a knowledge of the human heart, the developement of feeling, refined sentiment, beauty of description, grace, and elegance.——The confusion and self-accusation of the lovers, in the presence of *Circe*, when they came to be absolved by her‖—the dignified conduct of the gracious enchantress§—the silent retreat of the criminal pair, oppress by conscious guilt**—are highly natural and truly affecting; and show the author's perfect knowledge of the human heart.

From this faculty, of speaking to the feelings, and exhibiting the pathetic, and impassioned, the transition is obvious and easy, to the power of seising and depicting the various traits of character.—In this respect,

* See Book III. v. 929.
† See Book III. v. 1356.
‡ See Book III. v. 1067.
‖ See Book IV. v. 1119.
§ See Book IV. v. 1176.
** See Book IV. v. 1194.

and

and in another, which I shall hereafter mention, the poem of *Apollonius* is most truly dramatic. He possesses, in an eminent degree, a talent, which has the most striking and happy effect, in the drama; I mean, the art of contrasting personages and characters. Thus, many of his incidents and conversations, are so well imagined and contrived, that they would gain peals of applause, were they to be exhibited, on the stage.—— The concealed ambition of *Jason*, the artful aspiring covered with the veil of modesty, is contrasted, with the superior nature, and towering dignity, of *Hercules*, feeling his own greatness, and rejecting the command, offered to him, by the unanimous consent of the *Argonauts*, as conscious that rank or station could add nothing to the greatness of his character.—The ferocious bravery, and impious boasting, of the turbulent and savage *Idas*, are opposed to the calm resolve, and pious daring, of the noble and determined *Idmon*, and the divine prescience of the enlightened *Mopsus*.—The impetuous friendship, the sudden heat and fury of *Telamon*, at the close of the first book, are dexterously set, in juxtaposition with the calmness, the prudence, and patient address, of *Jason*, intent only on his great object, postponing every other consideration, and submitting to every thing, which may forward its attainment. —In the combat between *Amycus* and *Pollux*, and the description of the two champions; in the details, of the intercourse between *Jason* and *Æetes*; in the conferences, between *Juno*, *Minerva*, and *Venus*; in the negociation, where *Medea* artfully circumvents the simplicity of *Absyrtus*; we may remark our poet's skill, in grouping and contrasting his figures.

It would be easy, to multiply instances, to show the excellence of *Apollonius*, in pourtraying characters.—— What a bold and masterly delineation does he give us, of

of *Hercules*, although that hero appears, but for a short time, in the action of the poem! How artfully does he recal him, to the recollection of the reader, when it is least expected; and, even in his absence, impress an idea of his virtue and greatness!—The artless and simple majesty, the unbending firmness, and self-centered grandeur, the disregard of private interest, the scorn of ease and pleasurable indulgence, the love of conflict and toil, peculiar to the hero, are admirably marked out, in the sketch, which is given by the poet!—The supercilious pride and jealous ferocity of *Æetes*; the amiable hospitality, and scrupulous regard to justice, of *Alcinous*, are exhibited, in the most lively manner.—The good-natured artifice, the well-meaning intrigue, and female love of meddling, in *Aretè*; her contrivance to circumvent her husband, and save *Medea*, by hastening her nuptials with *Jason*, are highly natural, characteristic, and interesting.—But, above all, we must admire the character of *Medea*, as a masterly portrait.——Every feature, every line, is accurately just, and natural; and shows the strongest conception, and the happiest execution. It is not surpast by any thing given in *Shakespeare*.†—*Medea* has been, at all times, a favourite of the tragic drama. But, in no hands does she appear more perfectly herself, with all her terrors, and all her allurements, than in those of our poet.—Her violent love, her stormy passions, her deep dissimulation, her artifice, her insinuating address, her prevailing eloquence, her inflexible resolution, her powers of sorcery, her af-

* See Book I.

† If we could suppose Lady *Macbeth*, as violently possessed by love, as *Shakespeare* has shown her to be actuated by ambition, she would be *Medea—ferox invictaque.*

fectation

fectation of virtue, and semblance of decorum, joined with a real anxiety to conceal the enormity of her conduct.—All these form such a mixed character, such an union of contrarieties, as the great poet of the *English* stage was delighted to paint, and are fully sufficient to evince the skill of our poet in depicting character.

Nobleness and dignity of sentiment, is the next quality, which we shall find occasion to notice, in our author.—The high-minded refusal of *Hercules*, to accept the offered command of the *Argonauts*—his self-denial, in remaining behind, at the ship, when his companions went to enjoy themselves with the *Lemnian* women—his noble reproof, of the sensual and unworthy luxury, and indulgence, of the *Argonauts*, and their generous shame—the conduct of *Alcides*, a third time, in remaining behind, with a chosen few, to guard the ship, while the rest of the band proceeded to share the hospitality of *Cizycus* and the *Dolions*.——The pious resignation and determined magnanimity of the illustrious augur—his generous contempt of life, foreseeing, as he did, that he was ordained to perish, if he joined the *Argonautic* expedition, yet, resolved to join it, and despising existence, when placed in competition with glory—the contention and subsequent reconciliation of *Telamon* with *Jason*—the gallant manner, in which *Pollux* represses the insolence of *Amycus*, and accepts his challenge—the noble conduct of *Peleus*, on observing the dismay, with which the proposal of *Æetes* had inspired the *Argonauts*.——To these I may refer the reader, as ample proofs, how much our author excels in this great and substantial poetical beauty.

I now proceed, by a natural transition, to remark in *Apollonius*, a strain of eloquence, and a display of perfect skill and mastery, in all the arts of oratory.—*Dionysius* of *Halicarnassus* has traced out, with considerable minuteness,

minuteness, the same species of skill and artifice, in many of the speeches of *Homer*; but, I think, we may trace, in those of our poet, the superior refinement and information of the age, in which he wrote.—We see more of address, of artifice, and management; a more studious attention to form and decorum; something more exquisite, and recherché, in the choice and application of the topics.—In this respect, however, he may have been indebted, on some occasions, to *Homer*; and, perhaps, also, to different epic and dramatic writers, who preceded him, and whose works have not reached us.——The poem of *Apollonius* abounds in speeches; and in all these speeches we find examples of persuasive address, and oratorical artifice. We observe, for instance, much of this talent, in the speech of the aged *Polyxo*, to the assembly of *Lemnian* women—in the plausible account, which *Hypsipile* gives to *Jason*, of the expulsion of the males from *Lemnos*—in the artful and political speeches of *Jason*, in the second book; intended to prove the spirits of his followers, and ascertain the extent of their courage and perseverance.—— But, above all, on those occasions, where *Medea* appears, and speaks, the poet shows his skill and mastery, in all the artifice of oratory, and the whole science of addressing the feelings, and awaking the passions.

In considering the poetical talent and excellence of *Apollonius*, it is impossible to overlook the happy use, which he makes of his various learning, and the dexterity and address, with which he applies the mythology and traditions of the ancients, to the purposes of embellishment—this faculty may, sometimes, have been carried to an excess, and degenerated into pedantry and affectation, as I have already observed; but, doubtless, it brings with it a degree of awful and solemn magnificence; and impresses the mind with a religious enthusiasm.

siasm.——In the solemnity of his manner, and the apt and energetic application of mythology and tradition, he has been most nearly imitated by *Virgil* and *Milton*—. in the ready and dexterous introduction, of the various treasures of his learning, in current use through his poem, there is no writer, who, in my apprehension, approaches him so nearly as *Ovid;* whose stores of traditional and mythological knowledge are inexhaustible, and who appears to have studied our author with attention, and to have imitated him on many occasions.—— Every page of our poet furnishes us with proofs of his learning, and of his ingenious manner of introducing it. —We may notice, at random, *the various figures represented on the mantle of *Jason*, in the first book— the allusion† to the awful mysteries of the *Cabiri*, preserved in *Samothrace*—the solemn rites to *Cybele*,‡ and the *Idæi Dactyli*, on mount *Dindymus;* and the sublime description of the appearance of the goddess, in the same book.—The beautiful and tender episode of *Parebius*,‖ in the second book.—The origin of the *Etesian* breezes.§—The splendid appearance of *Phebus*,** returning from *Lycia*.—The solemn religious rites, and the hymn of *Orpheus*.††——The tomb of *Sthenelus*,‡‡ and the noble appartion of the hero, in the same book. ——The incantations of *Medea*, and the rites of *Brimo*

* See Book I. v. 721.
† See Book I. v. 915.
‡ See Book I. v. 1115.
‖ See Book II. v. 470.
§ See Book II. v. 676.
** See Book II. v. 912.
†† See Book II. v. 500.
‡‡ See Book II. v. 676, *et sequentes.*

Hecatè.

*Hecate.**—The legend of *Phaeton.*——The account of the disagreement between *Thetis* and her husband *Peleus.*—The fabulous origin of the island of *Corcyra.*—The story of the nymph *Macris*, and the account of the *Atlantides*, in the succeeding books.

I proceed, now, to notice a particular, which must strike every reader of *Apollonius*, and surprise him not a little, when he considers the general and universal learning of this writer, and adverts to the circumstance of his writing, in a commercial age, when geography began to be tolerably well known, and in a commercial country, which possessed extraordinary means of acquiring this branch of science, and had particular reasons for attaching herself to its study; I mean his most extraordinary fabulous system of geography, which was not only visionary, and romantic, unsupported by what was then commonly reported and believed, concerning the topography and relative situation of distant countries, but must have been well known to be so, by the author himself. The fact, I believe, is, that there were a number of traditional legends, which established a sort of poetical geography, in full possession of public currency, from which, the poet did not think himself at liberty to depart, at the time when he wrote.—The *Argonautic* expedition was naturally a favourite subject with the *Grecian* writers. It was one of those national tales, which did honour to the spirit of adventure, and the heroism, of the early *Greeks.*—When these legends were first composed and published, the knowledge of geography was very rude and imperfect, and the writers themselves were, probably, very barbarous and unlettered.——The origin of this romantic legendary geography of the *Argonants*, most probably, had its sole

* See Book II. v. 914.

foundation

foundation in ignorance; though it may have also been recommended to the early *Greek* poets, by its superior wildness, and its tendency to admit a series of extraordinary hazards, and surprising adventures. However that may be, it is likely, that this legendary geography took such firm root, and obtained such credit, by presumption, that it became somewhat like a part of the *Grecian* mythology, and could not well be displaced, even by polite and learned writers, when they came to treat the subject of the *Argonautic* expedition.—In the same manner, the romances and early poems of ancient modern times, if I may be allowed the strange expression, for want of a better, together with a *Gothic* mythology peculiar to them, employ a sort of wizard or fairy geography, wholly fanciful and fictitious; a geography, which annihilates time and space, confounds all the known boundaries of sea and land, and conveys a young lady, without any danger, delay, or difficulty, from *Cathay* to *France*.—It assembles together heroes, from every quarter of the world, and sends the same cavalier, to display his prowess, and acquire glory, in every quarter of the globe, like the knights of *Ariosto*.

——— " E per lei,
" In *India*, in *Media*, in *Tartaria* lasciato
" Avea infiniti ed immortal *Trofei*.
" In ponente con essa era tornato,
" Dove, sotto i gran monti *Pirenei*,
" Con la gente di *Francia*, e di *Lamagna*,
" Re *Garlo* era attendato a la campagna."

This kind of fabulous or legendary geography, became so generally received, and so fully established, by common use, that it was hallowed, by antiquity, and a sort of religious veneration; so that it seemed to be a species of poetical sacrilege, to examine or question it; and long

long continued reception gave it probability.—Thus, we find it displayed in the authentic scriptures of chivalry, the early romances, and the numerous epic poems of the *Italian* school.—We find the champions of *Christendom*, the knights of *Arthur's table ronde*, and the *Paladins* of *Charlemagne*, passing with surprising ease and velocity, from kingdom to kingdom, without finding any impediment—they traverse every part of the globe, and leave their trophies in regions the most remote from each other.—Nor can this poetical license be ascribed to an ignorance of geography in those times—no—it is very apparent, that geography was neglected, and the natural bounds of countries invaded or confused, for the sake of giving greater scope to a wild invention, and introducing a variety of romantic and marvellous adventures. In the same manner, and on the same principles, the early writers, who took in hand the interesting and eventful story, of the *Argonautic* expedition, found themselves induced, to depart from what was well known, respecting the site of remote countries, and to conduct their heroes by an imaginary, and, indeed, impossible route.

From these considerations it will appear manifest, that a minute and critical examination, of the geographical details of our author, would be a mere waste of time and labour; and that we should be grossly mistaken, were we to suppose him seriously responsible, for the manner in which he conducts the *Argonauts* out, and home; since, in fact, he found their route ready traced before him, and well knew, that it was wholly fictitious and imaginary, and subordinate to the purposes of embellishment and amusement.—Whether he follows *Timagetus*, *Hecataeus Milesius*, or *Herodorus*, who treated the subject of the *Argonautic* expedition, antecedent to our author, does not fully appear; but *Valerius*

rius Flaccus, by following our poet in this particular, and the agreement of other writers, as *Apollodorus* of *Athens*, seem to confirm the supposition, that the fabulous geography, of the *Argonautic* route, was so fully established, that it could not be shaken.

These particulars, which I have stated, were some of the charms, which attracted the admiration of the judicious *Virgil*. The mild majesty, the scientific refinement, the cultivated and measured graces of *Apollonius*, enchanted his soul. He wisely estimated his own strength, and properly judged, that such an exemplar was more imitable by him, in the correctness and artifices of composition, than the mighty father of epic poetry, in his vast conceptions, and heaven-ward flights.—*Virgil* studied the graceful poet of *Alexandria*, with daily, with nightly care.—He made him his inseparable companion, he inhaled his spirit, he imbibed, if I may so say, his juice, and vital blood, until they became part of his own substance.

A moderate degree of attention, to the poems of *Homer* and *Apollonius*, will serve to convince any reader, at once, without the necessity of recurring to history, that they must have been writers of a very different age and education; that their works must have been composed, in very different states of society; that they both viewed and read human nature, but human nature considered in different attitudes, and under different aspects. It must appear, that *Homer* wrote, while society was yet young, and man but little formed or subdued, by rules, by customs, and civil ordinances, not far removed from the simple life, the vigorous and undisguised feelings, of the pastoral, and heroic ages. *Apollonius*, on the contrary, shows that he wrote, when society was more formed and regulated; when the manners of men were more polished, their sentiments more refined; when the

the charities of life were extended, and better felt, and understood; when the decorums and proprieties of conduct had more sway, and there were greater research, reflection, and contrivance, in the motives of action.—The sentiments, both in *Homer* and *Apollonius*, are the sentiments of nature. These writers were both painters, who delineated from the life—they both express the feelings of the heart, the genuine workings of the mind, *with a learned spirit of human dealings;* but, in *Apollonius* we discover more of the plaits and foldings of the heart; we penetrate, with the author, more deeply into the secret recesses of the soul.—Thus, the topics are less obvious in *Apollonius*, though not less natural, than in *Homer;* the remarks are less open to common observation, such, as, in his state of society, could not have occurred to *Homer*, but, which, having been made by the later poet, forcibly strike us, as just and natural.

The court of the *Ptolemies*, where the genius of *Apollonius* was formed, no doubt, exhibited as much politeness of manners, and delicacy of sentiment, at least, as any court of our modern times.——Hence, when we come to compare his poem with those of *Homer*, we perceive a material change. In the later writer, we find sentiments more refined, exprest in more courtly and polished language; a greater appearance of care and study; an elegance of thought and diction, unknown to *Homer*.——We find in *Apollonius* even a turn of correct gallantry, which would not misbecome a knight of modern chivalry and romance—one of the heroes of *Ariosto*, *Spenser*, or *Tasso*.

Love is the passion, which particularly embellishes the poem of *Apollonius*.—The refinements, the vicissitudes, the conflicts of the passion were displayed by him, with the hands of science and philosophy. In the more rude and simple times, when men were strenuously occupied

occupied in the pursuits of agriculture, of hunting, or of war, there was little refinement in the intercourse of the sexes; the expressions of feeling were plain and simple; the process to the indulgence of a mutual inclination was brief, and unembarrassed by affectation or ceremony. The dear delays, the fascinating suspense, the charming mystery, the tender solicitude, the sentimental delicacy, the mild decorums, the veil that modesty throws over the avowals of the female wish.—Of these we find few traces in the writings of *Homer*, who took his ideas from the pastoral and heroic times. A more advanced state of society produced a greater variety in the motives of action, more intricacy in the affairs of men; and this complication in the intercourse of life, introduced into the arrangements, that produce the union of lovers, multiplied difficulties, perplexities, embarrassments, and intrigues—thus, love began to occupy more of the time and thoughts of men; to be considered more as a business of life; and to be treated more scientifically by writers. In proportion, as it became the subject of more thought and consideration, and excited more extensive and lasting interests among men, it afforded more constant and varied employment, for the exercise of their talents. It was then, that the joys, the sorrows, the fears, the hopes, the disappointments, and triumphs of love, began to furnish a new and most fertile department, to the cultivation of the muse.—*Homer*, it is true, has transient displays of passion and tenderness, but they seem to be merely accidental, without research, or study of the heart. They are such sudden bursts of feeling, as we might expect in the ruder states of society. We have not the patient investigation, the gradual unfoldings, the instructive pourtraiture of human emotions.

Antecedent

Antecedent to the productions of the *Alexandrine* school, some writers had expressly and exclusively chosen the passion of love for their subject—such, for instance, were *Mimnermus*, *Alcæus*, *Anacreon*, *Sappho*, *Erinna*, and the rest of the erotic poetesses. The tender and feeling *Euripides*, who had formed himself, in the school of moral philosophy, to an acquaintance with the heart, has given us some learned and instructive displays of the human breast, in the conscious emotions of *Phædra*, the jealous rage of *Medea*, the conjugal tenderness of *Alcestis*. But, it seems to have been reserved and destined, for the writers of the *Alexandrian* court, to treat love, as a science; and to bring the muse of amorous feeling to her utmost refinement and perfection. The *Idyls* of *Theocritus* speak the very voice of nature; and exhibit all the varieties of passion, in the young and artless bosom.

"Ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error."

And, as to *Apollonius*, he anatomizes love, with all the skill of a master, who had watched every glance of the impassioned eye, felt every pulse of the enamoured heart, and knew how to read and express every emotion and expression of the soul. But, I find I have anticipated topics, that belong to another essay.

Thus, have I endeavoured to point the attention of the reader, to the chief excellencies, which distinguish our author. I have also noticed, though, I must own, with reluctance, certain peculiarities and blemishes, which, as critical justice compels us to admit, prevent our feeling, in their whole force, the effects of his beauties. I cannot forbear repeating my observation, that the most convincing proof, of the value and excellence of the poem of *Apollonius*, is the circumstance, of the refined

refined and judicious *Virgil* having selected, and studied him, as the companion and guide of his muse, the model of his style, the constant object of his imitation. Unconquerable industry, and exquisite taste, in refining, correcting, and polishing their works, seem to have been peculiarly the gift of these two congenial poets. And the same happy result appears in both. Nothing can be more sweet, more refined, more perfect, than their versification; and their language every where bespeaks delicacy, care, and choice.—The genius of *Homer* is sublimely great, and irresistibly rapid—it is, indeed, a fire from Heaven—it strikes with the force of condensed lightning. His genius overawes and astonishes us, like the most sublime spectacles of nature. *Apollonius* and *Virgil*, though less vigorous and potent in their fire, are not less beautiful and resplendent in their lustre. They fill the hemisphere, with a diffusive glory, an expansive light, that kindles and flames in mild and lambent glory, over all the vaults of heaven, like the northern lights.

ESSAY THE FIFTH.

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS

AND

VIRGIL

COMPARED.

A TRANSLATOR is naturally led, to consider the character and talents of his author. In reviewing the production of *Apollonius Rhodius*, in order to ascertain the kind and degree of his genius, it would appear an unpardonable negligence, should I omit, or but slightly notice, one of the most striking circumstances, in his literary story, the share, which his poem had, in forming and guiding the genius of *Virgil;* and in furnishing materials, for the imitation and adoption of the great master of *Latin* song. Though the subject could not wholly escape the observation of the many editors, translators, and critics, who have bestowed their attention on *Virgil;* yet, it has been only casually introduced, and soon dismist. They have not attended sufficiently to the resources, which might be drawn from our author, in correcting the text, or illustrating the meaning, of his illustrious imitator. And while they have busied themselves, in drawing together parallel passages, from *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and *Theocritus;* they have scarcely looked into

the copious storehouse of our author. The several points of resemblance, the unequivocal acts of imitation, the comparative merits of the two writers have not been made the direct theme of examination, or discussed as fully and minutely, as justice, and the claims and reputation of the *Greek* poet demand. I have adverted, in some measure, to this topic already, but, as the enquiry is peculiarly the province of a translator of *Apollonius*, it deserves to be pursued more extensively, and to occupy an entire essay, on this occasion.

There is an extraordinary degree of similarity, in the genius, talent, manner of thinking, style, and diction of these two writers, born in countries, and in ages, distant from each other, and composing their works in different languages. And, what is equally striking and remarkable, there seems to be a strong similitude in most of the circumstances of their lives and fortunes. Both these poets had the happiness of being born in a polite and literary age, when letters were cultivated, and learned men were favoured and encouraged. The muses flourished, under the favour and protection of wealthy, munificent, learned, and intelligent princes; who presided over opulent, polished, and well informed subjects; and united taste with magnificence, in elegant and voluptuous courts. Both writers had the advantages of a learned education. Their minds were alike filled with the treasures of various information. They were deeply tinctured with a knowledge and sense of religion, while, at the same time, their thoughts were expanded and raised, by the study of philosophy. Each of them lived in a brilliant æra of poetry, when a number of admirable cotemporary writers mutually excited a noble emulation. They both encountered envy, and opposition, and seem to have been engaged, in altercations, and literary warfare, with their coevals. *Apollonius* was stigmatized,

stigmatized, for his rancour, under the name of *Ibis*, by *Callimachus*, as has been already mentioned; and was, for a time, the victim of his conflict with him, who was first his preceptor and friend, afterward his rival and enemy. *Virgil* has immortalized *Bavius* and *Mævius*, by the slight notice, which is bestowed on them, in one of his eclogues. But these were not the only writers, whose malevolence contributed to adorn his triumph. As soon as his *Bucolics* appeared, an anonymous author produced *Antibucolica*, in which he poorly attempted to ridicule the style of *Virgil*, by a sort of parody—as—

"*Tityre*, si toga calida tibi est quo tegmine fagi."

And——

"Dic mihi, *Damœta*, cujum pecus, anne *Latinum*?
"Non, verum *Ægonis*, nostri sic rure loquuntur."

And——

"Nudus ara, sere nudus, habebis frigora—febrem."

A writer, named *Carvilius Pictor*,* wrote *Æneido-mastix*.—A writer, named *Herennius*, published a collection of the faults of *Virgil*; *Perillius Faustinus*, of his thefts; and *Octavius Avitus* composed eight volumes, entitled Ὁμοιολεξιῶν, in which he professed to point out what verses *Virgil* had borrowed, and from whence.—Both *Apollonius* and *Virgil* seem to have encountered want, and difficulties, in their earlier days; they both surmounted them; and died in full possession of the honours and distinction due to their genius.

The circumstances of the times in which they lived; the course of education, and progress of the fortunes, of these two great poets, being thus similar, it is by no

* A worthy imitator of *Zoilus*, who wrote *Homero-mastix*.

means extraordinary, that they should have displayed a similarity of genius, possessed similar endowments, and exhibited the same kind of beauties, the same peculiarities of manner. Nor is it surprising, that the latter poet should have been strongly impelled, to imitate his predecessor, who not only has resembled him, in genius, but in all the adventitious circumstances, which call forth genius, and determine exertions. Hence it comes, that *Virgil* has not merely imitated *Apollonius Rhodius*, in particular passages, or affected a general resemblance, in style and manner; he has imbibed (if I may so say) his very juices and substance; insomuch, that the vital blood of the *Grecian* poet, seems to flow and circulate, through the veins of his legitimate *Latin* descendant.—Thus, they both exhibit, as the result of the circumstances of their education and fortunes, a display of various learning, a philosophical spirit, a serious and religious disposition, conceptions highly elevated, a tone of pomp and grandeur, with a politeness of manner, a courtly delicacy, and refinement of sentiment, lively perceptions of beauty and grace, with an uncommon talent for describing, or rather painting.——While we remark, in both writers, the same majesty of thought, the same calm dignity, like the flowing of a smooth and deep river; we find, also, a clear and luminous imagination. The forms and phantasms of natural external things, and the circumstances, symptoms, and concomitants, of human passion, are most clearly set out, and detailed. The happiest expressions wait, at their call, to clothe their conceptions in language.—We find the happiest propriety of language, the most exquisite aptitude of epithet, words that paint in a sentence, that comprise a description, or a character, in a single expression.——I have already remarked, that *Apollonius* is too minute and laborious in his paintings; but, this circumstance

circumstance resulted from his solicitude, to paint from the life, and to exhibit perfectly the object before him. —*Virgil*, who, perhaps, surpast all poets that ever lived, in taste and judgment, is never betrayed into this fault. He is never tautologous, never redundant, never tiresome. We perceive, in every page of *Apollonius* and *Virgil*, that they had explored the treasures of various learning; but, in particular, that they were no strangers to moral philosophy.

There is one feature of resemblance, highly deserving of notice, when we come to compare these twin stars, with the great luminary, who preceded them; an appearance of excursive and curious research, in the choice of materials, a certain manifestation of study and industry, in deriving them from more remote sources; a greater appearance of artifice and skill, in the disposition and employment of them. The productions of *Homer* are like the vast and stupendous *Egyptian* temples, that overawe, and almost terrify, the astonished beholder, by their immensity, their gigantic proportions, and massy greatness, which seems to be consecrated to eternity.——The productions of *Apollonius* and *Virgil* seem to resemble magnificent palaces, built for the reception of men, according to the rules and symmetry of *Grecian* architecture. The events, in *Homer*, are less connected and prepared—there is less contrivance and coherence in the fable—the incidents flow, as it were, spontaneously, without any marking or designation of operating cause, or mutual dependency, or they are brought forward suddenly and unexpectedly, by the direct interference of some deity. *Apollonius* and *Virgil* display more of the springs of action—they avail themselves more of the operation of moral causes, because they are better acquainted with their varieties and details. The story, therefore, has more relation to the characters

characters and feelings of the agents; the events flow from, or are influenced, by their dispositions, in a perceptible and natural manner; and the reader finds a new source of pleasure, in tracing this connexion.—— There is, in short, in the poems of *Apollonius* and *Virgil*, more of what modern writers distinguish by the name of intrigue.—The wrath of *Achilles* furnishes the subject for the *Iliad*. But, this is a simple emotion, producing a simple effect, the retirement of *Achilles*, and, in consequence of it, the defeat of the *Greeks*. Here is no amplification, no display of passion. The subsequent events seem to arise of themselves, as it were accidentally, or are brought forward by the direct interposition of the different deities. We have none of that profound complication of motives, none of that amplification and display of passion. On the contrary, what a web of intrigue is woven; what a complication of cause and effect! what a series of embarrassments, to the completion of the main action, are produced, by the operation of love, in the poem of *Virgil!* and what a train of consequences follow, and how much is the catastrophe made to depend, on the prevalence of the same passion, in the soul of *Medea*, as described by *Apollonius Rhodius!*—It is observable, as a point of resemblance, in these poets, that, as they ascribe much to the operation and influence of love, and allow it to employ a considerable proportion of their poems, they show, alike, that, in so doing, they formed a just estimate of their own talents; since, on this theme they are peculiarly successful, and show themselves admirable masters of passion, in developing the birth, the violence, the conflicts, and the despair of love.

Every attentive reader of *Apollonius* and *Virgil* must observe, a certain family resemblance, in the happiness and aptitude of their figures and metaphors, in the glowing

glowing and graphical force of expression, and the excellence of striking and luminous description. We are surprised, at the delicacy of taste, which prevails in their writings; the refined judgment, wakeful, alive, and feeling at every pore, to grace and beauty, and all this recommended and embellished, by the delightful concord of sweet sounds; that seem to be tuned for heavenly harpings; and intended to sooth the ears of celestial beings.——To what shall we ascribe this fraternal coincidence, in beauty and delightfulness? what similar extraneous circumstances have acted on similarity of innate genius?—May not minds be trained and formed, to an uncommon sensibility and refinement, in their respective functions, by the being perpetually conversant with beautiful objects, fragrant scents, and harmonious sounds: *Apollonius* and *Virgil* were, undoubtedly, much favoured by fortune, in this respect. All that was most refined and exquisite, in every province of the fine arts, was not only not within their reach, but, perpetually offered to their senses. The taste and magnificence of the *Ptolemies*, seconded by the ministry of active agents, and the command of immense wealth, were exerted, generation after generation, in assembling at *Alexandria* the most perfect productions of the *Grecian* pencil and chisel. The theory of sounds was cultivated with care, as a branch of mathematical science; it is to be presumed, that the practice of harmony was carried to a high degree of perfection, in an elegant and voluptuous court, like that of the *Egyptian* kings.——With respect to *Virgil*, the ingenious and learned Mr. *Spence*, in his *Polymetis*, endeavours to show an agreement, between the works of the *Roman* poets, and the remains of the ancient artists; and to illustrate them mutually by comparison.——It is probable, that *Virgil* has derived considerable aids, from the

the labours of preceding painters and sculptors; and was led by a diligent contemplation of excellent pictures, which must have been perpetually before his eyes, to an intuitive perception of beauty, symmetry, and grace.——*Milton*, too, who possest, in a distinguished degree, the same instinctive taste, the same correct and classical eye, and the same learned and musical ear, had similar advantages. His travels on the continent, afforded him opportunities of seeing the finest remains of antiquity, and the most perfect productions of modern art; while, at the same time, he attuned his ear, by all that was known and practised in harmony, by all that was most exquisite in musical performance.

I have hitherto dwelt, in a general manner, on the resemblance of these two great poets.——The subject is so interesting and engaging, that, I persuade myself, the reader will not be displeased, to descend into a more minute enquiry, and to examine more particularly, the features of resemblance.

The first point, in which I shall compare them, is with respect to invention, the prime attribute of a poet. —In this, the *Latin* poet bears away the palm from his *Grecian* predecessor. Much more of the contexture of the fable was purely his own. In this respect, the invention of *Virgil* differs as much from the invention of *Apollonius*, as well as of *Homer*, as the invention of the historian, who undertakes to embellish a true history, differs from that of a composer of a novel or romance. *Homer* was in possession of a great event, not so far removed from the times in which he wrote, as to want the charms of probability.—*The tale of Troy divine*, (and the same may be said of the legend of the *Argonautic Expedition*,) was endeared to the *Greeks*, by all their passions, and prejudices. The action was, in itself, as great, as it was interesting, in its consequences. However,

ever, as *Apollonius* wrote, at a time so distant from the event he describes, he wants that vivid impression of freshness, that charm of probability, that opportunity of depicting existing manners, and, in some measure, of referring to the memory of living witnesses, that fell to the share of *Homer*. I think, therefore, we may venture to say, in common of *Apollonius* and *Virgil*, that they had the more laborious and difficult task, of making up, by the excellence and beauty of their fictions, by the variety and ingenuity of their episodes, by the novelty and richness of their embellishments, what was wanting, in the grandeur, the probability, and the interest of their fables, considering the times in which they wrote. All the characters and manners of the *Homeric* heroes were, in some measure, established, ascertained, and known, by historical tradition. *Homer*, also, had the advantage of possessing all the learning of his time; so that his work, in comparison with the measure of information, which was then generally diffused, was a prodigy, exhibiting a complete assemblage of all that could be known, in every branch of science, when he wrote.——Thus, we admire his skill in surgery, medicine, and anatomy, his geographical detail, his intimate knowledge of pedigrees, and religious rites and ceremonies.——*Apollonius* and *Virgil* found themselves in a very different predicament. They were not the poets of a simple unlettered age—they were not to address themselves, like the venerable father of epic song—to—

" Many a kind domestic train,
" Whose pious hearth, and genial bowl,
" Had chear'd the reverend pilgrim's soul."

Akenside, Ode to Hastings.

The kindred poets were fated, to write for ages polite, learned, and refined, in the highest degree. The *vast*

heroic things, the divine legends of the fabulous times, the atchievements of gods and demigods, had already been seised by poets, who preceded them; and became, as it were, private property, by the rights of prior occupancy, in the epic and tragic poets.——They could not hope to dazzle, by the extent and variety of their knowledge; the ground plot of the sciences had now been surveyed, and divided into a thousand portions; and allotted to a thousand different proprietors, each of whom understood the nature, genius, and culture of the soil he possessed, and carefully managed his farm to the best advantage. Vain and visionary must have been the expectation of the poet, who sought to attract notice by profound learning, while he found himself excelled, in every branch of science, by him, whose province it was, to write on sciences alone.——What then was to be done, by the ambition and genius of the daring poets, who aspired to wrest applause from readers polite, learned, and fastidious, who had the beauties of *Homer* treasured, in their minds, and were, in some degree, acquainted with the whole circle of sciences?—Such readers required to have their attention solicited, and their fancy captivated, by poetical exertions of uncommon merit, they called for originality, though it was difficult of attainment—they required to be charmed by new and exquisite allurements, by graces of an high and uncommon character.—It became necessary for *Apollonius* and *Virgil*, in the first instance, to devise something, by which they might hope to balance the excellence of the *Homeric* fable, in probability and interest, to arrest the attention of the reader, and obtain a full dominion over his mind. They were led to search, in the regions of pure invention, for what they no longer found in the records of supposed reality.—They were taught, to interest the reader, by the number

ber and variety of uncommon incidents, and the complication of intrigue; to dazzle and amaze him, by pompous visions, magnificent fictions, sublime and grand machinery; by the variety and appositeness of their similitudes.

If *Homer's* work, according to *Pope*,* is a wild paradise, a copious nursery of productions of every kind, the poems of *Apollonius* and *Virgil* may be compared to pleasure grounds, laid out with the most exquisite taste, and filled with exotics from every soil; where nature is drest to such advantage by art, that all seems pure nature, and art disappears; where the noblest productions, of every soil, are arranged, and flourish in the most picturesque groupes. If *Homer*, in fine, has excelled more in the probable fable; *Apollonius* and *Virgil* excel, where they have studied to excel, in the marvellous and the allegorical.

Homer had seised, as we have seen, and appropriated to himself, the destruction of *Troy*, and the wanderings of *Ulysses*, the most popular legends of ancient story. Next to these in celebrity, and in some measure connected with them, inasmuch as it prepared the way for the expedition to *Troy*, and showed that the *Greeks* could contend with advantage against the *Asiatics*, and new adventure against ancient empire, and peaceful wealth, and luxurious population, was the *Argonautic* enterprise. This, also, as well as the *Trojan* war, had been the favourite theme of poetry, and if not equal, it is, without all question, the next in degree of interest.—*Apollonius* was not discouraged, by the great number of his precursors in this career, and his choice was felicitous.—The subject was well adapted to the variety of talent, which he possessed. It combined together, in an uncommon degree, the great, the marvellous, the various,

* *Preface to his translation of Homer.*

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the pathetic, and the tender.—It was a subject fitted to flatter the national vanity, and partialities, of the *Greeks*. ——The romantic adventures of the *Argonauts*—their dangers, their daring, the perpetual change of scene, the loves of the *Lemnian* women and their queen, the passion and conflicts of *Medea*, her potent incantations, and the perilous situation of her lover, afford a wide field, to the genius of a poet. The latter poem of *Homer*, had something more accessible to mere mortal intellect, something less dazzling and overawing to the eye of imitation, than the divine *Iliad*; and, at the same time, something wonderfully engaging and popular, in the variety of scenery, the quick succession of objects, the exhibition of life and manners, which it comprehended. The story selected by *Apollonius*, coincides with the *Odyssey*, in the circumstance of the hero being a great traveller, in its containing a quick transition from object to object, a change and contrast of scenery, an interesting variety of strange adventures, a description of the manners and customs of different nations, all naturally introducing themselves, as incident to the subject of the poem, a maritime enterprise. In the details of the voyage, the account of the manners of different nations, the descriptions of places, in the episode of the visit of the *Argonauts* to *Lemnos*; in the narrative of the manner, in which the fleece was obtained, by the incantations and intervention of *Medea*, and the conflicts of *Jason*; in the danger and despair of the adventurers, amid the inhospitable *Syrtes*; in the transformation of the *Hesperian* nymphs, the appearance of *Glaucus*, and of *Triton*, the destruction of *Talus*, *Apollonius* is highly original, and displays an admirable invention, sometimes great and sublime, sometimes gloomy and terrific, sometimes gorgeous and splendid, then, wild and playful, and, again, soft, tender, and affecting;

affecting; a delightful imagination, an abundant fertility, which cannot be surpast.

Virgil, whose judgment was consummate, readily saw, that the stories of *Grecian* history were not well adapted, to make an impression on the *Roman* reader. Finding the subjects it afforded unfavourable to his purpose, he wisely dismisses them, in general, with contempt, as trite and common, *omnia jam vulgata*.——With great skill and dexterity, he contrives, to extract from the mass of fabulous and heroic history, a subject, which was fitted to excite an interest, in the bosoms of his countrymen, the fame and fortunes of the first founder of their parent city, the oracles, that announced the future greatness of the *Roman* empire, the difficulties, that delayed and impeded the establishment of its parent stock in *Italy*, afforded themes, that came fully home to the heart and feelings of every *Roman*. At the same time, such was the infinite address, with which the fable of the *Æneid* was chosen, the poet was able, by making his hero of the *Julian* line, and deriving their descent, through him, from a divinity, to pay his court, with artful flattery, to his sovereign.——At the same time, the fable was such, that the author was enabled to avail himself of the beauties of preceding writers; to cull, from the epic poets of *Greece*, and from her most admired tragic writers, who may be considered as a sort of commentators on *Homer*, all that suited his purpose, and to enrich himself, by the naturalization of their beauties.—Thus, he avails himself, of the wanderings, the dangers, and adventures of *Ulysses*, and of the *Argonauts*.—He imitates the loves, of *Jason* and *Hypsipile*, and of *Medea*, and embodies them, in the person of *Dido*, for the embellishment of his poem.

It did not so necessarily fall into the plan of *Virgil*, to make his hero a great traveller, but the beauty of the narratives

narratives of the voyages in the *Odyssey* and *Argonautics* enchanted him. He saw, that the dryness of his story, and the triteness, which might, in some measure, be objected to it, (as if it were only a continuation of the *Iliad*,) and the scantiness of his materials, might be aided, by driving *Æneas* out of his course, and throwing him, by the force of adverse winds, on distant shores.—Here we find a striking resemblance, between the authors of the *Æneid*, and of the *Argonautics*. But, the advantage, with respect to the travels of the heroes, is evidently on the side of the *Grecian* poet, in point of originality, interest, and probability.——The voyage of the *Argonauts* is the profest original object of these brave adventurers. The reader seems to embark with them, at the port of *Iolchos*.—He looks forward, to the happy completion of it, as the great wish of the heroes—the grand subject of the poem. This leads you to expect surprising adventures, and the descriptions of many strange countries, and people. You see these gallant men offering themselves to dangers, seeking out difficulties, to atchieve a romantic and perilous adventure. You see them frequently on the point of perishing, yet, still pursuing their object, with heroic steadiness and perseverance. This is, in itself, a grand and more interesting spectacle, than that of persons merely driven out of their course, by tempests, and conflicting with adverse winds. As the voyage in *Apollonius*, is more intimately connected, with the fable, and catastrophe of the poem, indeed, part of the very stuff, of which they are wrought, the poet found himself at liberty, to dilate in his accounts of the places the heroes visited, and the different tribes with which they met in the course of their voyage.

The *Lusiad*, which exhibits many features of resemblance to the *Argonautics*, has this similar advantage,

of being, at once, an epic poem, and a narrative of a maritime expedition. This merit is wanting, to the wanderings of *Æneas* in *Virgil.*———When the *Roman* wished for a voyage, to embellish his poem, he was obliged to introduce it, as an episode. This gave it a subordinate character, and not only deprived it of part of its interest, but also confined the author, on account of the small space, which he was able to afford it, to a more comprest and dry detail of circumstances. Here, he has shown himself inferior to *Apollonius*, in fertility of invention. He has borrowed much more from *Homer;* and his adventures and incidents show less fancy, less originality, and excite a less powerful interest, than those in the *Argonautics*. At the same time, we cannot but admire the address of *Virgil*, in chusing for himself a subject, so applicable to *Roman* history, and, at the same time, contriving to bring, within the compass of his poem, the most illustrious portion of the heroic *Grecian* story; and, also, that precise particular point of it, which exhibited, in the shortest space of time possible, an immense display of noble atchievements, of memorable events, and of marvellous changes, in the affairs of *Greece*, of *Asia*, and *Italy*. This was the period, when the seas beyond *Sicily* began to be frequented by the *Greeks;* and the mariners, who returned from these voyages, circulated a variety of stories, concerning the wonderful things, they had seen and heard.—The choice of this period also, afforded another peculiar advantage to *Virgil*, whose *forte* lay in an imitation, performed with such exquisite taste and judgment, that, in his hands, it became originality; an imitation, by which he most completely made his own, and transmuted into gold, the crude and rough materials, furnished by preceding poets. —He found more materials collected, and ready to his hand,

hand, fit to be employed, in the construction of a poem, on the period, which he actually selected, than he would have obtained, had any other part of ancient story been the object of his choice.

Not only the wanderings of *Ulysses*, but also the voyages and adventures of the rest of the heroes, who returned from *Troy*, were celebrated, in a variety of poems, which were called Νοστοι. The affairs of *Troy*, subsequent to the close of the *Iliad*, had been treated by a variety of poets, called cyclic writers. The *Greek* and *Latin* tragic muses had been abundantly occupied, by the fates and fortunes of the *Greek* and *Trojan* heroes and heroines.——The curious reader will find much learning on this subject, collected by professor *Heyne*, and an ample enumeration of writers, and productions, epic, dramatic, and historical; from which, it is probable, that the *Mantuan* poet derived much assistance.—From the *Greek* tragedy, especially from the pathetic *Euripides*, it should seem, that he not only drew many incidents, but imbibed much of his pathos, his grandeur, the importance of his reflections, and learned to give the dramatic form, to many parts of his divine poem—*spirat tragicum satis*.—This may be seen, in the artful speeches of *Sinon*, in the beautiful and tender episode of *Andromache* and *Helenus*, in the miserable state of *Achæmenides*, in the impassioned character, and tender feelings of *Dido*, the fury of *Amata*, the beautiful episode of *Nisus* and *Euryalus*, the delightful picture of *Pallas* and *Evander*, so finely grouped and contrasted, with that of *Lausus* and *Mezentius*. In these, and many other passages, we see how *Virgil* has availed himself, of the example of the tragedians; and studied to unfold the workings of pas-

* See *Heyne*, first essay, *Æneid*. Book II.

sion,

sion, and call out all the affections of the heart. But this topic belongs, more properly, to another part of this essay.

We find both *Apollonius* and *Virgil* delighted much in oracular warnings, in obscure and dark predictions, in allusions to the future, unintelligible at the moment, and to be unravelled by succeeding events, like the responses of the *Pythoness*. It is not surprising, that these two admirable poets should have agreed, in making this striking use of predictions, to carry on the actions of their poems.—Their exquisite judgment directed them to this expedient, as the means of communicating an extraordinary degree of interest to the fable, of conferring on it grandeur and importance, a solemnity and religious awe, of introducing the reader, as it were, into sacred groves, and gloomy sanctuaries, of awaking the attention, and stimulating the curiosity. The place of his birth, and the course of his studies, predisposed *Apollonius*, to the adoption of this kind of machinery. *Egypt*, as I have already remarked, might be considered, as the head-quarters of gloomy, profound, and awful superstitions, the chosen seat of judicial astrology, and the occult sciences. Her hieroglyphics, her religious rites, her public monuments, were all calculated, to excite sentiments of fanatic enthusiasm, and a tendency to the superstious, the mysterious, and the wonderful. As *Apollonius* was deeply skilled in all the learning of the *Egyptians*, it is not improbable, that a perusal of the *Scriptures*, which abound in prophetic passages, exprest with a kind of poetic fury, and dark sublimity, might have had a considerable effect, and contributed to form, or encrease this fondness for prediction.

Somewhat similar and analogous to this device, is the introduction of visions, which, by a shadowy typification of events, conveyed a partial knowledge of the future, sufficient

to rouse, but not to satisfy, the curiosity of the reader. Here, again, the *Alexandrine* poet might have been indebted to the *Scriptures*. Be that as it may, he has introduced visions, of singular beauty and effect, conceived with great strength of fancy, in all the sublime spirit, of oriental poetry.—The whole enterprise of the *Argonauts* is originated, from the oracle, that designates obscurely a certain person, who is fated to destroy *Pelias*.—Chance fixes the suspicions of the tyrant on *Jason*, who is, in consequence of this, dispatched on a most perilous mission.—*Jason* constantly refers to the oracles of *Phebus*, and supports the courage of his comrades, in dangers, and difficulties, by reminding them of the assurances of divine support, which he had received from *Apollo*.—The apparition and prophecy of *Glaucus*, in the first book, have a critical influence, in composing the differences of the heroes, and reconciling them, to the loss of *Hercules*.——How interesting and pathetic, is the prediction of the gallant *Idmon*, foretelling his own untimely fate!——How beautiful is the omen of the halcyon sweeping round and round, and perching on the vane of the ship, as *Jason* lies asleep! Not inferior is that of the dove, escaping from the hawk, and taking refuge in the bosom of the hero; which naturally directs him, to look towards the queen of love, to whom the bird was sacred, for favour and protection, The warning precepts introduced, with such oracular solemnity, by the venerable and interesting *Phineus*, powerfully excite the affection of the reader; and prepare him for the catastrophe, without too much anticipation of the event.—The portent, of the horse of *Neptune* springing from the waves, and coursing over the sands of *Lybia*, to direct the perplexed *Argonauts*, how to shape their course, over that trackless desert, is nobly conceived, and aptly introduced, by

by the preceding prophecy of the heroines, or *Atlantic* nymphs, who partly reveal the truth, partly involve it, in types, and figures, and ambiguous sayings. And the warning foretaste of the future, given in visions, is introduced by the poet, with equal happiness, and effect, and described, with equal genius and sublimity.

Virgil, who had studied *Apollonius*, not merely with care, but with filial veneration; who had also, in his hands, the *Sibylline* oracles, and who had cultivated the natural enthusiasm of a poetical genius, by an intimate acquaintance with the *Platonic* philosophy, filled, as it is, with a sort of religious enthusiasm, and ardent mysticism, perceived this turn of writing with a natural predilection, and his admirable judgment soon pointed out, the striking use, to which it might be applied in poetry. He observed, that the prophetic denunciation of future events, has a wonderful power of affecting the mind. The desire of penetrating into the future, seems to be implanted in man. The doubt and uncertainty, which hang about oracular predictions, and the wakeful expectation, which they excite, become the means of acting on the passions.—The sublimely obscure terms, the dark and pregnant brevity, in which these divine communications are usually conceived, are susceptible of the highest poetical grandeur; and fill the reader with a sort of holy horror.

I have observed, that the use of mystical agency, and religious device, was highly in character, with respect to *Apollonius*, considering the country, in which he lived, and the education he had received; the same was the case with respect to *Virgil*. The *Roman* poet, as professor *Heyne* observes, lived in an age, when all the world was captivated with a strange fondness, for oracles and predictions; so that nothing could be more grateful, to the predominant taste of the generality,

rality, than such a mode of forwarding the catastrophe of his poem.——The *Argonautics* and the *Æneid* commence alike, with a prediction; and there is throughout a remarkable parallelism of prophecy, in the two poems.——The *Argonauts* have their future wanderings explained to them, by *Phineus*. *Helenus* discloses to *Æneas*, a prophetic sketch of the delays, which must intervene, the regions he must visit, and the difficulties he must encounter.—There is a remarkable coincidence in the closes, of the two speeches, of *Phineus*, and *Helenus*.—They stop short abruptly, in the midst of their prophetic fervours; they impose silence, on themselves, through a fear of displeasing the deities, by too full a disclosure of futurity.—The *Argonauts* are perplexed, by an obscure injunction, to recompense their mother, for the care she had taken of them, and the sufferings she had endured, by bearing them in her womb.—The *Trojans* are terrified, by the ambiguous and unintelligible menace, of the harpy *Celeno*, who tells them, that they shall be reduced, to eat their tables.—*Triton* is raised from the deep, to direct the *Argonauts* on their way.—*Æneas* descends to the infernal shades, to learn from the spirit of *Anchises*, the future events of his voyage; and *Anchises* discloses to him these particulars, and also the names and fates of his posterity. *Latinus* is warned, by oracles, and prodigies, of the arrival of the *Trojans*, and of the alliance, that awaits his daughter. Thus, *Virgil*, who has endeavoured, with great skill, to avail himself of every beauty, which he observed in *Apollonius*, has introduced portentous and monitory visions, with very striking effect. And these devices and machines he has managed so judiciously, that they seem rather offered to him, nay, forced upon him, by his subject. For whether the legends were originally devised by older poets, or actually received, as truths, in popular

popular tradition, there was a wonderful agreement of writers, concerning the visions, omens, and auguries, which preceded and announced the arrival of *Æneas* in *Italy*.——*Phrygia* was, as it were, the original seat of the arts of divination.—Departing from hence, the *Trojans* are said, to have imported these arts with them, into *Greece* and *Italy*. In fact, in all rude ages, before the birth of philosophy, and diffusion of knowledge, the belief in oracular predictions, omens, and divination, has been general.—The authority of oracles was particularly great, on every occasion of leading out new colonies. Of course, nothing could be more applicable to the circumstance of the *Trojans* settling a colony in *Italy*, than omens and predictions. The poet took up this old superstition; and adapted it to the support and embellishment of his fable; so that every thing, which he relates, seems actually to proceed, from the decrees of fate, and the intervention of the deities; which gives a wonderful air of probability, and an high degree of solemnity to his narrative.—*Virgil*, in his tenth *Æneid*, line 33, says—*sin tot responsa secuti quæ superi manesque dabant*.—*Æneas* assures *Dido*, that the injunctions of *Gryneus Apollo*, and the *Lycian* oracles, compel him to seek *Italy*.—Book IV.

" Sed nunc *Italiam* magnam *Gryneus Apollo*
" *Italiam Lyciæ* jussere capessere sortes.—
" Me patris *Anchisæ*, quoties humentibus umbris
" Nox operit terras, quoties astra ignea surgunt,
" Admonet in somnis, et turbida terret imago.
" Nunc etiam interpres divum *Jove* missus ab ipso,"
&c.——
—— " Italiam non sponte sequor."

He mentions, also, that *Cassandra* had early pointed out *Italy*, as the destination of the *Trojans*.——In the third

third book, he introduces old *Anchises*, as alluding to the circumstance.

" Sola mihi tales casus *Cassandra* canebat,
" Nunc repeto hæc generi portendere debita nostro
" Et sæpe *Hesperiam*, sæpe *Italia* regna vocare.
" Sed quis ad *Hesperiæ* venturos litora *Teucros*
" Crederet? aut quem tum vates *Cassandra* moveret?
" Cedamus *Phœbo* et monitis," *&c.*

The poet, also, with great art, makes the views of his hero gradually open upon him. The promises of the divinities develope themselves, and become comprehensible with the advance of time—he is conducted gradually, from predictions, which are dark and obscure, to such as admit of more easy interpretation. The shade of *Hector*, Book II. v. 281, promises him a settlement; and tells him, he shall found a colony beyond the sea; but points out no determinate place.

—— " Tibi commendat *Troja* penates.—
" Hos cape fatorum conutes, his mœnia quære,
" Magno pererrato quæ statues denique ponto."

The *Penates* appearing to *Æneas*, in a vision, Book III. v. 163, point out *Italy*, as his resting place, in terms tolerably plain and clear; and show what was meant, by the oracle of *Phebus*, when it directed them to seek out the ancient seats of their fathers.

" Mutandæ sedes—non hæc tibi litora suasit
" *Delius* aut *Cretæ* jussit considere *Apollo*
" Est locus *Hesperiam Graii* cognomine dicunt.
" Terra antiqua, potens armis, atque libere glebæ.
" *Ænotri* coluere viri, nunc fama minores
" Hæ nobis propriæ sedes, hinc *Dardanus* ortus
" *Jasiusque* pater, genus a quo principe nostrum."

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The information given by *Helenus*, in the same book, v. 381, is still more clear and explicit. He informs *Æneas*, that he must expect considerable delays, in his progress to *Italy*. He points out the various regions, which he must visit; he imparts to him a certain sign, which, he tells him, shall indicate the place and time, of his founding his colony. He sets his mind, in some degree, at ease, respecting the prophecy of the harpies, which seemed to menace dreadful famine.——He cautions him, against touching at any part of the *Italian* coast, where *Grecian* colonies were established; and instructs him, in what manner he should perform solemn religious rites. He apprizes him, of the dangers, which he has to apprehend, from *Scylla* and *Charybdis*. He advises him, in the most impressive and eager manner, to appease the wrath of *Juno*, and cultivate that deity; and, lastly, counsels him, to seek out the *Cumæan* sibyl, and to learn from her the future events, and course of fortune, that await him in *Italy*, in terms yet more clear and plain.

" Quin adeas vatem, precibusque oracula poscas
" Ipsa canat, vocemque volens atque ora resolvat.
" Illa tibi *Italiæ* populos venturaque bella,
" Et quo quemque modo fugiatque ferasque laborem."

The reader will observe a marked resemblance, between the speech of *Phineus*, in the *Argonautics*, and this of *Helenus*, in the *Æneid;* not only, in the general tendency, but in the parts and topics.——*Æneas*, having succeeded, in his application to the *Sibyl*, Book VI. v. 165, says——

—— " O sanctissima vates,
" Prescia venturida, non indebita posco

" Regna

" Regna meis fatis, *Latio* considere *Teucros*,
" Errantesque deos, agitataque numine *Troja*."

She enters into a more specific and explicit revelation, of the various events, which were to befal the *Trojans*, and their leader, in *Italy*.—Verse 84.

—— " In regna *Lavini*
" *Dardanidæ* venient mitte hanc de pectore curam:
" Sed non et venisse volent, bella horrida bella
" Et *Tybrim* multo spumantem sanguine cerno."

—— " Alius *Latio* jam partus *Achilles*,
" Natus et ipsa dea, neç *Teucris* addita *Juno*
" Usquam aberit," &c.

" Causa tanti mali conjux, iterum hospita *Teucris*
" Externique iterum thalami," &c.

——— " Ito,
" Quâ tua te fortuna sinet. Via prima salutis,
" Quod minime reris, *Græciâ* pandetur ab urbe."

Thus, the sibyl uttered her ambiguous and circuitous predictions; while the god, who ruled her labouring breast, some truths revealed, in terms concealed the rest. *Æneas*, by his earnest and pathetic entreaties, prevails on the *Sibyl*, to conduct him to the infernal regions. He descends, under her guidance, reaches the *Elysian* fields, and has an interview with the shade of his father. In this conversation with *Anchises*, new and more perfect lights are poured, on the mental eye. The revelation of the divine will is completed; and the future fortunes, and all the events, with which the ages to come were pregnant, are opened to his view. The venerable shade makes his destined progeny pass in order before him. An exhibition, which is rendered natural, and apposite, on this occasion, by a most ingenious and

and happy application, of the docrines, of the *Pythagorean*, and *Platonic* philosophy, respecting the soul. He conducts him, by a rapid glance, over the acts of his posterity, who were fated to reign in *Latium*, to the foundation of *Rome;* and thence, to the full completion of the glories of the *Julian* race, in the person of *Augustus Cæsar*.

" Et tumulum capit, unde omnes, longo ordine, possit
" Adversos legere, et venientum discere vultus.—
" Nunc age *Dardaniam* prolem, quæ deinde sequatur
" Gloria, qui maneant *Italâ* de gente nepotes
" Illustres animas, nostramque in nomen ituras
" Expediam dictis, et te tua facta docebo," &c.

—— " Huc flecte acies, hanc aspice gentem,
" *Romanosque* tuos, heic *Cæsar* et omnis *Iuli*
" Progenies, magnum cæli ventura sub axem.
" Hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti sæpius audis,
" *Augustus Cæsar*, divum genus," &c.

The learned reader will find, in an essay, subjoined to the sixth book of the *Æneid*, by professor *Heyne*, an interesting and curious enumeration, of different epic poets, who have introduced similar prophetic reviews of history.*——It is obvious, that *Virgil* has not the merit

* *Heyne* deduces the series of poetical prophecy, from *Homer*, and the predictions of *Tiresias*, in the eleventh *Odyssey* downward: the strains of prophetic eloquence, in the *Prometheus* bound of *Æschylus*—the obscure vaticinations of *Cassandra*, in *Lycophron*.—In *Lucan*, the sorceress *Erictho* reanimates a slain soldier, and makes him prophecy to *Sextus Pompeius*.——In *Silius Italicus*, B. XIII. v. 400, *Scipio* resorts to *Autonoe*, the *Cumæan Sibyl*,

merit of originality, in this narrative of the descent of *Æneas*, to consult the shade of *Anchises*, and avail himself, of the prophetic warnings of the venerable dead; it

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Sibyl, who, at his intreaty, evokes the shades, to foretel the future.—And, in his third book, v. 570, in imitation of *Virgil*, he introduces *Jove*, as revealing to *Venus* the future fortunes of the *Roman* people.——In *Spenser's Fairy Queen*, the sage *Merlin* declares to *Britomart*, the future success of her love, and the fortunes, and future fates, of her posterity.—In *Ariosto*, *Bradamante* arrives at the tomb of *Merlin*, and learns, partly, from the mouth of that sage enchanter, partly, from the shades, evoked by the magic art of *Melissa*, the future fortunes of the house of *Este*.——In another part, she sees the wars, which were in other times, to be carried on, by the *French*, in *Italy*, depicted on the walls, by the magic art of the same *Merlin*. In another passage, a prediction, respecting the fate of *Hippolytus d'Este*, is very ingeniously introduced.—In *Tasso's Gierusalemme*, the race and fortunes of the house of *Este*, are exhibited to *Rinaldo*, by a hermit, pourtrayed on a shield.—In the poem of *Trissino*, the history of future times is inwoven with his poem, by way of narrative, in two places.—The first is in Book IX. where *Belisarius* meets a hermit, on mount *Casius*, who shuts him up in a grotto, where were two vast mirrors—the one, exhibiting the past——the other, future events.——The other is in Book XXIV. where *Narses*, while he remains in *Nursia*, part of what is now called the dutchy of *Spoleto*, visits the ancient *Sibyl*.—Professor *Heyne* proceeds to point out a similar use of predictions, in the *Henriqueida* of the Count of *Ericeira*, a noble *Portuguese* poet.—In the *Lusiad* of *Camoens*, by a very awkward imitation of *Virgil*,

it is imitated, and that closely, from the descent of *Ulysses* to confer with the shade of *Tiresias*. It is not unlikely, too, that *Apollonius* had the prophetic admonitions of the goddess *Circe* in view, when he put a similar disclosure of the future into the mouth of *Phineus*. *Anchises* concludes with a full disclosure of the future fortunes of his son.

—— "Natum per singula duxit,
"Incenditque animum famæ venientis amore:
"Exin bella viro memorat quæ deinde gerenda,
"Laurentisque docet populos urbemque *Latini*;
"Et quo quemque modo fugiatque, feratque laborem."

Similar to this machinery, (as I have already observed) which reveals the future either in part, or in the whole, by the voice of oracles, the mouths of prophets, and inspired persons, the apparition of departed shades, or the intervention of the deity, is the use of dreams and visions, which gives an admirable opportunity to a poetical imagination, of combining a doubtful shadowy display of futurity, in a

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Virgil, *Jupiter* is introduced disclosing to *Venus*, the future good fortune of the *Lusitanians*.—In two subsequent cantos, however, the poet makes ample amends; and most nobly and happily introduces his revelations of futurity.—In the *Paradise Lost* of *Milton*, the archangel *Michael*, in his conference with *Adam*, after his fall, makes the future pass in review before him.—The learned professor also adverts to the *Henriade* of *Voltaire*—the *Columbiade* of Madame du *Bocage*—the *Maid of Orleans* of *Chapelain*—the *Clovis* of *Desmarets*—the *Malthe*, or *Lisle Adam*, of *Privat de Fontenilles*—the *Saint Lewis* of *Le Moine*.—In all of which, this kind of machinery is introduced, in various forms.

little glooming light much like a shade, with that wild and fanciful imagery, that disregard of the laws of nature, and the rules of probability, which the very nature of a dream authorises. This gives occasion, for the relieving of the dryness of a narrative, and relating many circumstances, which are necessary to be known, to the reader, in a more figurative, ornamented, and interesting manner.—The different visions, introduced by *Apollonius Rhodius*, may be cited, as instances of the highest beauty, and the most exquisite genius, in the contrivance.—*Virgil*, who saw the admirable use, to which the machinery of visions might be turned, has employed it yet more frequently than *Apollonius*, and always with fine effect. How beautifully is *Hector* introduced, in the vision in the second book!——how natural is it! and how properly does it usher in the calamities that follow!

" Tempus erat quo prima quies mortalibus ægris
" Incipit, et dono divum gratissima serpit.—
" In somnis ecce ante oculos mœstissimus *Hector*
" Visus adesse mihi, largosque effundere fletus," &c.

The influence of visions, in conjunction with other ominous appearances, and portents, contributes to hurry on the unfortunate queen of *Carthage*, to her last act of desperation.

" In somnis ferus *Æneas:* semperque relinqui
" Sola sibi, semper longam incomitata videtur
" Ire viam, et *Tyrios* desertâ querere terrâ."

In the fifth book of the *Æneid*, there is a fine vision, most happily and artificially introduced, at a very important crisis, *dignus vindice nodus*, where some preternatural warning was requisite, to decide the perplexed counsels and uncertain purposes of the hero.——This vision

vision also prepares the reader, for the subsequent descent of *Æneas* to the infernal regions, guided by the *Sibyl*.

—— " In curas animus diducitur omnes.—
" Et nox atra polum bigis subvecta tenebat,
" Visa dehinc cœlo facies delapsa parentis
" *Anchisæ* subito tales effundere voces," &c. &c.

" Congressus pete nate meos; non me impia
" Namque," &c. &c. &c.

In the seventh book, *Latinus* is admonished, by a vision, to expect the arrival of strangers, and a foreign husband for his daughter. In the eighth book, *Æneas*, revolving the opposition, that awaited him in *Italy*, is filled with great perplexity.

—— " Magno curarum fluctuat æstu,
" Atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit
" Illuc."—

From this anxiety he is relieved, by a dream; in which the river god, *Tiber*, appears to him, with assurances of his future success, and directions for his conduct.

" Nox erat, et terras animalia fessa per omnes
" Alituum pecudumque genus sopor altus habebat:
" Cum pater in ripâ gelidique sub ætheris axe
" *Æneas* tristi turbatus pectora bello
" Procubuit seramque dedit per membra quietem
" Huic deus ipse loci, fluvio *Tiberinus* amæno," &c.

The whole passage is wonderfully picturesque and poetical.

The use of portents and prodigies, and the introduction of deities, and other supernatural beings, form another branch of machinery, which poets (as I have said) employ,

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encrease the interest of the story; by conveying dark and imperfect glimpses of futurity, and, at the same time, introducing striking and uncommon incidents, and splendid and ornamental descriptions.——It is no very safe enterprise, however, for the poet to wander far, in this region of enchantment. Portents and prodigies are instruments, which cannot be wielded, with safety, by an unskilful hand. Injudiciously employed, they will be the means of shocking probability, and even degenerate into the monstrous, the ludicrous, and the burlesque.—*Horace* was well aware, that this kind of machinery was very nice, in the management, and liable to abuse; since he cautions the poet, against the intemperate use of supernatural agency.——*Nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus.*—The occasion must be so important, as to justify an inversion of the common relations of cause and effect, and the intervention of deity, in an extraordinary manner.—Nor will it suffice, that the crisis may be urgent and momentous; the interference and agency must be conformable to the religion, the superstitions, the popular prejudices, the received traditions, of the people, to whom the poet addresses himself.—And still, even with the utmost care and genius, in the use of such machinery; passages of this kind are those, which are least relished, by modern readers. They have a beautiful effect, in the modern mock heroic, a strong argument, to prove them unfit for the serious, as we see, for instance, in the *Rape of the Lock*, and in the sportive mythology of *Prior;* but, in serious modern composition, they excite disgust and ridicule. The mixture of *Pagan* mythology, with *Christianity*, is shocking.—The case, however, was otherwise, with the cotemporary readers of the ancient poets.—The *Greeks* believed devoutly, in stories of omens, prodigies, and divine apparitions; and abounded in superstitious rites.—The rites

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of *Cybele*——the *Idæi Dactyli*——the gloomy sacrifice of *Proserpine*—the *Eleusinian* mysteries—the various oracular shrines, gratified, and nourished this spirit.—The *Romans* were even more superstitious, than the *Greeks*, whose rites and ceremonies, as well as those of the *Egyptians*, they engrafted on such as were indigenous, particularly among the *Etrurians*, who surpassed most people, in fanaticism. The fables of *Numa* and the nymph *Egeria*——the story of the *Ancylia*—the institution of the rites of the *Lupercalia*, and the peculiar adoration of the god *Pan*—the various modes of divination —their *Lectisternia*—their dictators, nominated to drive nails in the capitol—their *Sibylline* oracles—their various sacerdotal orders—the vestal virgins, with the sacred fire—the *Pontifices*—the *Flamens*—the *Haruspices*—the *Salii*—the *Sodales Titii*—the *Potitii* and *Pinarii*.—— These, and a multitude of other strange and varied superstitions, must have nourished, in the general mind of the *Roman* people, credulity, and a fanatical spirit, and disposed it, to delight in omens and prodigies.— The history of *Livy* is a full proof, how much this credulous and superstitious temper prevailed among the *Romans*. We are surprised, at first glance, to find, in a writer, abounding in good sense, and profound reflection, like *Livy*, a collection of stories, fit only to frighten old women and children, round a winter's fire. The relation of the foreign and domestic events, of the year, is regularly closed, by a narrative of the prodigies and apparitions for the season; all of which were, in after times, collected, in the work of *Obsequens*.* But, our wonder will vanish, on a moment's reflection. The noble and admirable historian did not himself believe

* *Julius Obsequens, de Prodigiis.*——He wrote under *Honorius* the emperor.

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the tales he recounted, but he thought his annals would have been defective, without them. He well knew, that a great majority of his readers, not only believed, but, gladly received, such wonderful narratives; and, in writing as he did, he only conformed, to the taste and opinions of the times. It is observable, that, if the exquisite taste, and sound discretion, of *Virgil*, seem to forsake him, in any respect, it is in the too copious use, indeed, I might almost say, the wanton introduction of prodigies, the unnecessary violation of the laws of physical nature and probability. In addition to this, we must remark the disposition, to turn every thing into an omen. *Homer* leads the way, in this course of the marvellous, and he is followed, neither reluctantly nor slowly, by succeeding poets; and even surpast, in the multitude, and boldness of prodigies, by *Virgil*.

Some of the most notable prodigies, in *Apollonius*, are the apparition of *Glaucus*—the speech delivered by the ship *Argo*—the *Harpies*—the appearance of *Thetis*, and her nymphs, emerging from the deep, and assisting to raise the vessel over the rocks——the bird, that reproaches *Mopsus* and his companion, for staying with *Jason*—the appearance of the courser rising from the waves, and rushing over the sands——the successive transformations, and final apparition, of the *Hesperian* nymphs—*Triton*, rising from the lake, and delivering a sod, in token of amity——the transformation of that same sod, into an island—the wonderful conformation and strange death of *Talus*—all these are extraordinary things, and partake much of the nature of a fairy tale, or the stories of the *Arabian Nights*. But, *Virgil*, who had the *specious miracles*, and the portents, both of *Homer* and *Apollonius Rhodius*, before his eyes, has surpassed them both, in the marvellous.—The prodigies of *Virgil*, exclusive of the frequent intervention of deities,

on

on various occasions, which he has introduced, with an unsparing hand, are the following, among many others; the serpents, which twine themselves, round *Laocoon*, and his children, in the second book, which abounds, above all others, in divine apparitions, and prodigies—as this book contains the grand event, of the destruction of *Troy*, the poet probably meant, by this device, to exalt his narrative, and make it worthy of the subject. What a grand spectacle is presented to us, when *Venus* appearing, removes the film from the eyes of her son, and shows him the combined deities, hostile to *Troy*, actively engaged, in the destruction of the devoted city.

" Cum mihi se, non ante oculis tam clara, videndam
" Obtulit, et purâ per noctem in luce refulsit—
" Alma parens, confessa deam qualisque videri
" Cœlicolis, et quanta solet," &c.

—— " Divum, inclementia divum
" Has evertit opes, sternitque a culmine *Trojam*.—
" Aspice, namque omnem quæ nunc obducta tuenti
" Mortales hebetat visus tibi, et humida circum
" Caligat nubem eripiam," &c.

" Apparent diræ facies, inimicaque *Trojæ*
" Numina magna deum."

The obstinacy, and desire of death, of *Anchises*, who was determined, at first, to perish, and not to survive the ruin of *Troy*, are overcome, and he determines, to accompany *Æneas*, in consequence of a prodigy.

" Talia vociferans gemitu tectum omne replebat,
" Cum subitum dictuque oritur mirabile monstrum;
" Namque manus inter, mœstorumque ora parentum,
" Ecce levis summo de vertice visus *Iuli*.
" Fundere lumen apex, tactuque innoxia molli
" Lambere flammâ comas, et circum tempora pasci."

In the progress of the book, *Creusa*, whose absence is necessary to the future events of the poem, is snatched from her husband, in a wonderful manner, and reappears, for a short space, in a mode equally extraordinary.

" Heu, misera conjux, fatone crepta *Creusa*
" Substitit, erravitne viâ, seu lassa resedit,
" Incertum; nec post oculis est reddita nostris.——
" Infelix simulachrum, atque ipsius umbra *Creusæ*,
" Visa mihi ante oculos, et nota major imago.—
" Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit."

In the beginning of the third book, we find a portent, which, from its romantic wildness, has been the subject of imitation with succeeding poets.*——It is called, by the author himself——

" Horrendum et dictu mirabile monstrum."—

The gore, spouting from the rind of the lacerated myrtle, and the lamentable groans, and accents of *Polydorus*, sounding from the stem, which had sprung up over his dead body. *Virgil* seems to be aware of the boldness of this fiction, since he endeavours to palliate the recital, and to speak with hesitation.

" Nam quæ prima solo ruptis radicibus arbos
" Vellitur, huic atro liquuntur sanguine guttæ,
" Et terram tabo maculant.
" Eloquar an sileam, gemitus lacrymabilis imo
" Auditur tumulo; et vox reddita fertur ad aures."

I shall not speak of the harpies, or of the appearance of *Polyphemus*, in the same book, because these are not

* See *Dryden's* mask of King *Arthur*, &c.

the

the inventions of *Virgil*. In the same book, the *Trojans* observe four horses, grazing on the shore, which *Anchises* immediately turns into an omen.

" Bellum, O terra hospita, portas. Bello armantur."

In the fourth book, *Dido* is filled with terror, by the prodigy of her libations turning to blood.

" Vidit—thuricremis cum dona imponeret aris,
" Horrendum dictu! Latices nigrescere sacros,
" Fusaque in obscœnum se vertere vina
" Cruorem."

In the fifth book, we have a prodigy, which, evidently, shows the fondness of the poet for the marvellous, since it does not answer any purpose whatsoever—the change of the arrow of *Acestes* into a meteor, a prognostic, according to the poet, either of the future renown of the *Trojans*, or of the setting the ships on fire, by the *Trojan* women.*

" Heic oculis subito objicitur magnoque futurum
" Augurio monstrum: docuit post exitus ingens
" Seraque terrifici cecinerunt omina vates.
" Namque volans liquidis in nubibus arsit arundo,
" Signavitque viam flaminis." *&c.*

The golden bough, to which, after much search, the steps of the hero are directed, by the doves of *Venus*, is a beautiful fiction, but, certainly, bears much resemblance of the wild character of a fairy tale.——In the seventh book, a swarm of bees settles on the aged

* Commentators differ in their exposition of what was portended by this prodigy.——Some would refer it to the war between the *Sicilians* and *Romans*, in after times.

laurel,

laurel, consecrated to *Phebus*, to show the arrival of a foreign band, with their chief, who should possess themselves of *Laurentum*, the ancient city of *Latinus*.

—— " Externum cernimus, inquit,
" Adventare virum, et partes petere agmen easdem
" Partibus ex iisdem, et summâ dominarier arce."

The intimation, given by this portent, is confirmed, by mystic visions, in the sacred grove of *Faunus*.

—— " Cæsarum ovium, sub nocte silenti,
" Pellibus incubuit stratis, somnosque petivit.—
" Multa modis simulachra videt volitantia miris
" Et varias audit voces, fruiturque deorum
" Colloquio, atque imis *Acheronta* affatur *Avernis*."

These preternatural warnings are joined with another most alarming miracle,—a lambent meteor settles on the head of *Lavinia*, the daughter of King *Latinus*, and overspreads her hair, and head-dress. This kind of prodigy seems to have been a favourite with the poet, since he has introduced it before, in the second book, at v. 680.——The words, in the seventh book, are——

" Preterea, castis adolet dum altaria tedis,
" Et juxta genitorem astat *Lavinia* virgo,
" Visa, nefas, longis comprendere crinibus ignem,
" Atque omnem ornatum flammâ crepitante cremari.
" Regalesque accensa comas, accensa coronam
" Insignem gemmis: tum fumida lumine fulvo
" Involvi, ac totis *Vulcanum* spargere tectis."

But, the most surprising prodigy, in *Virgil*, and, certainly, the least necessary for the conduct of the fable, is the transformation of the ships of *Æneas*, in the ninth book,

book, while they are in danger of being burned by *Turnus*, into an equal number of sea-nymphs.

—— " Hinc virgineæ mirabile monstrum
" Quot prius æratæ steterant ad litora proræ,
" Reddunt se totidem facies pontoque feruntur."

A transformation, which is ascribed, by the poet, to the prayers of *Cybele*, which render *Jupiter* propitious to this miracle. These nymphs afterwards appear, (see the tenth book,) in a sort of marine pageant, and address the hero.

" Atque illi, medio in spatio, chorus ecce suarum
" Occurrit comitum, nymphæ quas alma *Cybele*
" Numen habere maris, nymphasque naribus esse,"
&c. &c.

" Nos sumus *Idæa*, sacro de vertice, pinus,
" Nunc *Pelagi* nymphæ, classis tua."

The appearance of the goddess *Venus*, with a branch of *dittany*, to heal her wounded son, in the twelfth book, is a bold fiction, but not without precedent, in *Homer*; and it is introduced, at such a critical moment, and is so necessary to the catastrophe of the poem, which requires, that *Æneas* should recover, and kill *Turnus*, that it seems to be in perfect conformity, with the rule of *Horace*.

From the preceding considerations, the transition is natural, to the religious sentiment and tendency, which prevail, in the writings of *Apollonius* and *Virgil*. Under this head, it is to be observed, that these two writers excel, in a certain sedate and composed majesty, and a calm solemnity, which are increased, and improved, by the prevalence of a religious spirit. This spirit is manifested, not only in magnificent descriptions, of the power

power and attributes, of the deities; reverential expressions towards them; a strong persuasion of their providential interference, in the conduct of human affairs; and a belief in a state of future existence after death: but, also, in the love of introducing sacrifices, interments, and other religious observances, and the minute care and punctuality, with which such ceremonies are described. In *Homer*, the venerable father of epic poetry, descriptions and sentiments, of the kind, I have mentioned, frequently occur; but, in *Apollonius* and *Virgil*, they are introduced, with more pomp and solemnity, and seem to have proceeded, from greater predilection, in the writer, for such passages. *Apollonius*, with a considerable degree of ingenuity and address, has contrived to infuse an awful gloom, and render many of his incidents more interesting, than, they othermight be, by adding an intermixture of religious feeling with antiquarian knowledge; while some particular adventure or occurrence is pointed out, as the origin of some sacred rite, or ceremony, some ancient superstition, still subsisting among the people.—Thus, we are told, that, through excess of grief, for the death of *Cizycus*, the natives of the region forgot to prepare their food; and that, in memory of the melancholy event, an universal day of fasting was still observed, on which the people eat coarse bread, of unsifted meal.——See Book I. v. 1075.—When the *Argonauts* land, for the purpose of watering, at the island of *Ægina*, and return, with vessels filled, at full speed, to their ships: this incident, we are told, gave rise to a custom, which, in the time of the poet, still prevailed in *Thessaly*, where young men, in memory of the transaction, contended in the race, bearing urns of water on their shoulders.*

* *Vide Argonautics*, Lib. IV. *sub fine.*

Virgil

Virgil has imitated this ingenious manner, of giving, at once, a solemnity, and interest, to his work, and of making classic ground of well known places, by pointing them out, as the scenes, where memorable events, recorded in ancient tradition, and celebrated in his song, had taken place.—Or, by showing the origin of popular opinions, or religious ceremonies. Thus, he traces, to the funeral games, instituted by *Æneas*, the original of the *Lusus Trojanus*.——He foreshows the descents, and famous actions, of most of the illustrious families in *Rome*. He sanctifies every spot, in and about that capital, by pointing out these places, as the hallowed scenes, where the good *Evander* had dwelt and reigned, and where the deified *Hercules* had been received, as a guest

" Aude, hospes, contemnere opes, et te quoque
dignum
" Finge deo."[23]

He gives the names, of *Cajeta* and *Misenus*, to different promontories——he points out the origin, of different priesthoods.—I cannot avoid repeating here, what, I think, I have observed, already, that *Apollonius* was inspired, with this religious feeling, as well as with the love of the solemn, the great, and marvellous, by the place of his birth, and the course of his education.—*Egypt* was a country, fertile in superstitions, and mysteries. It was the abundant source, from whence *Greece* derived her mythology, her religious rites, and philosophy. It was the seat, of all that was most awful, grave, and solemn.——One of the suburbs of *Alexandria*, was called *Necropolis*, or the city of the dead. All the monuments and edifices of the *Egyptians* bore the marks, of greatness, and vast gloomy solidity. Their pyramids, their palaces, their temples, their catacombs. Such an assemblage of surrounding objects, must

must have had wonderful influence on the natives of the country, and even on those foreigners, who visited that land of wonders, who found their imaginations strongly possest, with a sort of mysticism. This may plainly be seen, in the writings of *Plato*. It is also to be remembered, that the writers of *Alexandria* might have found another source of the gloomy, the solemn, the mystical, and prophetic, in the sacred *Scriptures*. *Ptolemy Philadelphus* had caused the inspired writings of the *Jews* to be translated into *Greek*, and thus rendered the perusal, of those mysteriously sublime volumes, accessible to the generality of readers. It is certain, that, in the writings of the *Pleiades*, may be found passages, which seem to be palpable imitations, from the *Old Testament*. —With respect to *Virgil*, there can be no doubt, of his being deeply skilled, in all the learning of the *Egyptians*. A similar spirit and disposition, to that of the *Egyptians*, might, also, be remarked, among the *Etrurians*, with respect to the number of their religious mysteries, the claim to remote antiquity, the multitude of their traditionary legends, and even the massiveness of their buildings, and public monuments.——There were, in *Italy*, many places ennobled, by ancient superstitions, and venerable legends: such as the sacred grove of the nymph *Egeria*—the territory of *Cumæ*, with the grotto of the *Sibyl*, the lake *Avernus*, and the *Acherusian* marsh, which were supposed to communicate with the infernal mansions; an opinion, in no wise strange, considering the mephitic exhalations, which prevailed, in those regions. —The *Italians* had, also, the *Sibylline* oracles, written, in a mysterious strain, of inflated enthusiasm, and religious obscurity. In *Virgil*, there is an entire eclogue, evidently made up, of imitations from passsges in *Isaiah*, prophetic of the coming of the *Messiah*, which sufficiently demonstrates, that he could not have been unacquainted

quainted with the prophetic and poetical parts of the *Old Testament.*

" At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu,
" Errantes hederas passim cum baccare tellus
" Miktaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.
" Ipsæ lacte domum referent distenta capellæ
" Ubera: nec magnos metuent armenta leones.
" Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores.—
" Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni
" Occidet. *Assyrium* vulgo nascetur amomum."

Eclogue IV.

Compare these lines, with the celebrated passage in *Isaiah*—" The wilderness, and the solitary place, shall " be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and " blossom, as the rose. The glory of *Lebanon* shall " come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the " box together. The wolf, also, shall dwell with the " lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid: and " the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, " and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and " the bear shall feed. Their young ones shall lie down " together, and the lion shall eat straw, like the ox. " And the sucking child shall play upon the hole of " the asp, and the weaned child, shall put his hand on " the adder's den."

From what has been already said, respecting the education, the habits, and circumstances of life, of *Apollonius* and *Virgil*, and a consideration how highly they were both accomplished, it must naturally be expected, that a character of learning should predominate in their works.—We find, accordingly, that this is the case, in an eminent degree.—The knowledge, of ancient traditions and legends, of mythology, and genealogies, of the origin of families, states, and cities, of rites, and ceremonies,

ceremonies, and an acquaintance with the writings of all the authors of merit, who preceded them, appears, both in *Apollonius* and in *Virgil*. The scholiast of *Apollonius* points out many passages, in which his author is supposed to have availed himself, of the ideas of the poets, who preceded him, and whose works no longer exist. In other passages, he evidently imitates *Homer*, and sometimes attempts to rival his master. In the beauty of his sentiments, in the strain of morality, which he inculcates, and in the dramatic form, so prevalent in the poem of *Apollonius*, it appears, how much he had profited, by a diligent perusal of the great tragic writers, of the *Grecian* stage. In particular, it will be seen, how far he was indebted to *Euripides*, for his first ideas, of the character of *Medea*, whom he has pourtrayed, with such ability.—*Virgil* spent his youth in *Naples*, which was the residence of several teachers of philosophy, and polite learning, and prosecuted his studies, with great industry, and intenseness, perusing the most elegant of the *Greek* and *Roman* writers. In addition to the many famous authors, from whose works *Apollonius* drew resources, and with all of whom *Virgil* was, no doubt, familiar, the productions of *Apollonius* himself, and the other great masters of the *Alexandrine* school, were presented to his imitation. Many additional aids were afforded to him, by the treasures comprised in his own language. He borrowed many ideas, and even adopted whole lines, from the venerable *Ennius*, and from him, perhaps, imbibed much of his *Tuscan* mythology, and religious predilections. He is said, to have confest, though in rather ungracious terms, his obligations to this writer.—He owed yet more, where he was not so ready to own the debt, to the sublime and philosophical *Lucretius*.——From this source, he has derived much of the beauties of his style and diction, and many of the graces

graces of his versification; his pregnant brevity; and sedate majesty of manner. It appears, in fine, that *Virgil* possest, in an eminent degree, the various stores of learning, and that he made the most happy and judicious use of them, for the embellishment and perfection of his poem.——It is remarked of the *Æneid*, that, it preserves to us more of the religion of the *Romans*, their rites and traditions, than all the other *Latin* poets (except *Ovid*) put together: and gives us the form and appearances of their deities, as strongly as if we had so many pictures of them preserved to us, done by some of the best hands in the *Augustan* age. The reader will see this fully evinced, by recurring to *Spence's Polymetis*.

Let us now consider *Apollonius*, and *Virgil*, with respect to pathos, or the selection and management of the circumstances and topics, which are adapted to excite emotions in the mind, and particularly those of terror, pity, and love. And it must be observed of them, in common, that, without the nauseating affectation of sentiment, the tautologous detail, and exposition of feeling, the declamatory display of passion, amplification of narrative, and enumeration of circumstances, they employ the simple unadulterated language of nature. They do not weaken the emotions, by an anxious study, and vain solicitude, to impress more deeply, and aggravate them. They preserve a discretion, and judicious retention, in the narrative. They do not overload it, with circumstances, but show an equal judgment, in what they relate, and what they omit, selecting those particulars, which pierce the heart, at a single touch. Among the pathetic passages, in *Apollonius*, the reader will be disposed, to pay particular regard to the following—the parting of *Jason* from his mother; and the grief and deplorable state of *Æson*, his aged father—the episode of the *Lemnian* women—the untimely

untimely and tragical death of the young monarch *Cizycus*, and his wife—the loss of *Hylas*—the description of *Phineus* and his sufferings; and the tender gratitude of *Parrhebius*——the death of *Idmon*, and of *Mopsus*—the description of the conflicts of *Medea*—of her purpose to destroy herself—her feelings, on leaving, for ever, the palace of her father—her expostulations, with *Jason*, and the leaders of the *Argonauts*, when she is apprehensive of being abandoned by them, to the fury of her father—the tragical death of *Absyrtus*, and, particularly, the circumstance, of his cruel sister being sprinkled with his blood——the conscious shame, and self-accusation, of *Jason* and *Medea*, when they appear, before *Circe*——the distress of the *Argonauts*, and the women, who accompany them, on the *Lybian* wilds.—All these, and many more, show our author unrivalled, in the pathetic; and peculiarly excellent, in the choice of those natural and appropriate circumstances, which give life and reality to the narrative, which make it, as it were, a vivid picture; and come directly home, to the feelings and affections of the mind.

Let us now turn to *Virgil*, and particularize some of his most pathetic passages; that we may have *Apollonius*, and his illustrious imitator before us, in one view.——Here, we may note the narrative of the death of *Sichæus*—the frank and favourable reception, which *Dido* affords to the *Trojans*, a reception fated to end in her own ruin—the caresses she bestows on the god of love, who sits plotting her destruction——

" Inscia *Dido* insideat quantus miseræ deus."

The death of *Laocoon*, and his children, in the second book—the lamentable fate of *Priam*; particularly, that electrifying circumstance, of his sliding in the blood of his own son, as he is dragged along, by the unrelenting

Pyrrhus

Pyrrhus—the destruction of *Troy*, and the resolution of *Anchises*, not to survive its fall—the pathetic expostulations of *Æneas* with him—the disappearance of *Creusa*—the tragical story of *Polydorus*, in the third book—the tender and beautiful episode of *Helenus* and *Andromache*, in the same—the whole fourth book is eminently pathetic—the descriptions of the growth and progress of love, in the female bosom, have been the admiration of critics in all times——

" Multa viri virtus animo, multusque recursat
" Gentis honos; hærent infixi pectore vultus
" Verbaque," &c.

" Incipit effari, mediâque in voce resistit——
" Sola domo mæret vacuâ stratisque relictis incubat
" Illum absens absentem auditque videtque——
" Non cœptæ assurgunt turres."

The plaintive expostulations of *Dido*, when she finds *Æneas* determined to leave her, are in the most affecting and pathetic strain of tenderness.—Here, however, *Virgil* cannot boast the merit of originality.—There were various sources, to which he might resort for materials, to aid him in this part of his undertaking. He might turn to the *Calypso* of *Homer*, the *Medea* of *Euripides*, and the mixture of tenderness and artifice, of soothings and menace, contained in her expostulations with *Jason*—but, above all, he had constantly in his view, and in his meditations, the poem of *Apollonius*, and we know—his poem speaks it, how much assistance he has derived from thence.—The sixth book contains many passages, which are highly pathetic.——Such are the appearance of *Dido*, and her resentful demeanour—the interview between *Æneas* and his father—the interesting

resting appearance of *Marcellus*, and the lamentation, for his future untimely fate——

" Si qua fata aspera rumpas—tu *Marcellus* eris."—

The admirable episode, of *Nisus* and *Euryalus*, is quoted, by every critic, and commentator on *Virgil*, as one of the passages, which do him the most honour, and as an inimitable specimen of the pathetic—and we are very artfully prepared for it, by the display of their friendship, in the fifth book.—But, however we must admire the judgment and dexterity of *Virgil*, in improving and embellishing the incidents suggested by *Homer*, in the episode of *Dolon*, *Diomede*, and *Ulysses*, we must be sensible, that, not only the first hints, but all the leading features, in that fine passage, are derived from the *Iliad*.—What an admirable picture is that, in the tenth book, of the filial piety of the young and generous *Lausus*, nobly devoting himself to preserve the life of his father, and extorting a lively interest and pity, even from the enemy, by whose hand he falls!——The paternal feelings, and indignant grief of *Mezentius*, impious as he is, excite our compassion and sympathy, particularly, when he says—

—— " Quid me erepto, sævissime gnato
" Terres? hæc via sola fuit, quâ perdere posses."

The death of *Camilla*, at the close of the eleventh book, and the sisterly affection of *Juturna*, and the death of *Turnus*, in the last book of the *Æneid*, are all noble instances of the pathetic powers of *Virgil*.

On the comparison of the passages, which I have mentioned, in these two poets, and of others, which will occur to the reader, on a perusal of their works, it will appear, that, although they show congenial talents, and

and must both be placed, at the very top of the scale of the pathetic, yet, that, if we are to give a preference to either, it is due to *Apollonius*, in this department.—In him there is more of native and unaffected feeling; his pathos is produced, with less appearance of labour and effort.—In *Virgil*, there is a more ostentatious display of study and research, of art, invention, and effect—in fine, a kind of made-up eloquence. The great talent and forte of *Apollonius* consists, in depicting love, and displaying its shades and ramifications, in exhibiting the varied, the discordant, the violent, yet suppressed and dissembled emotions, incident to the female character.—Here, he disports, as in his proper and congenial element.—Here, he speaks peculiarly from himself, without study, and without affectation.

Virgil having imitated the loves of *Medea* and *Jason*, in the amours of *Æneas* and *Dido*; it may not be unworthy of the attention of the reader, at this stage of the comparison between *Apollonius*, and the *Roman* poet, to enquire into the relative merits of the two great poets, in these most admired and celebrated parts of their works, where they admit of the fairest and most complete juxtaposition. In the first place, it must be observed, with respect to *Medea*, that she is a much more important personage than *Dido*, in the conduct of the fable. She is more essentially necessary to the catastrophe. She is introduced, in every part of the story. We never lose her from our sight, from the moment of her first appearance.—*Medea* being thus made a principal figure, in the picture, she naturally engages a lively interest. Her character, her passions, her feelings, are more momentous objects of attention. Their operation is vitally and inseparably connected with the success of the enterprise.—She is made still more interesting, by the

the picture, which is given of her.——She is naturally disposed to virtue.—She feels the ties of duty, and is repugnant, at first, to any outrage on the laws of decorum, any act of open resistance to her father; so that the interference of a deity is more necessary, to produce her concurrence in the designs of *Jason*, to carry away the *Golden Fleece*.—She is hurried on irresistibly to ill.—She struggles, to remain faithful to her duty.—She is propelled, by the influence, and overruling force of the deities, and a strange complication of circumstances.—Her consciousness—the feelings of her sex—a secret regard to decorum, embitter all her moments.—She stands before us self-accused, confessing and lamenting her weakness.—All this renders her a most interesting object; and even, in the midst of her crimes, awakens for her some degree of compassion.—The mixture of various talents, feelings, and dispositions; her pride of birth, her strength of mind, and commanding spirit—her artifice and dissimulation—her eloquence—her affectation of modesty;—these, in *Medea*, render her character highly noble and pathetic, and exhibit such a tissue of good and ill, such a stormy conflict of adverse emotions, and feelings and motives contending with each other, and alternately prevailing, in the bosom; that they excite in the mind of the reader a similar contention, between the sentiments of horror and aversion, and admiration and pity, which sustains a most lively interest, and never suffers the attention to flag.—Such mixed characters, as this, are the darling subjects of legitimate tragedy. Such, in the immortal productions of *Shakespeare*, are *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*.—These are the dramatic exhibitions, that most powerfully affect us, that raise a whirlwind and storm of passion, in the breast; and call out the human feelings and sympathies,

sympathies, by a contemplation of human nature as it really exists, in a mixture of good and ill. Far different is the effect, produced by the daubings of the *German* drama, the monsters, of unnatural, and worse than diabolical depravity, and the equally fantastic chimæras of unattainable and supernatural perfection. In forming his grand conceptions, of the noble character of *Medea*, *Apollonius*, no doubt, derived many aids from the admirable pourtraiture of this interesting female, already exhibited by *Euripides*.—He found her there described, as a woman, passionate, proud, and feeling, great in her birth, her talents, her endowments, her crimes, and her misfortunes.—Here was a noble pattern, and a fine field of competition. Nor did *Apollonius* shrink from the contest, or suffer, by comparison. He has preserved all her fiery, stern, and impetuous feelings; and, at the same time, added, from his own fund, the affecting details, of the rise and progress of her passion, the learned anatomy of the female heart.—The character of *Medea*, as produced by *Euripides*, is a very uncommon one.—In that poet's description of her, it is said—"Like an enraged lioness, her looks make us "tremble."—Her talents, her arts, her address, her finesse, and dissimulation, are well displayed. It is her destiny to be criminal, but, her heart is formed to love and practise virtue.——There is, surely, more of genius and instruction, in the exhibition of such a singular yet natural character, a character so truly tragic, in impressing the peculiarities, the difficulties of her situation, than in the portrait of *Dido*. She appears merely as an enamoured love-sick woman, who resigns every consideration, of female decorum, of pride, and policy, for the gratification of a wild and inordinate passion. The role, which *Dido* acts, is not so important, her interference not so happily connected, with the

main action. The attractions and importance of *Dido* would not excite a greater interest, than the amour of *Jason* with *Hypsipile*, or that of *Ulysses* and *Calypso*—or produce any thing more than a temporary delay of the voyage; but, the poet artfully resorts to the deadly hostilities, which, in after times, prevailed between *Rome* and *Carthage*, to give an adventitious consequence and dignity to *Dido*, as the foundress of the latter city.—This, perhaps, is the only stroke of originality, in this part of *Virgil*. His Queen of *Carthage* is decked in the spoils of all the enamoured females, who preceded her.—*Calypso*, *Circe*, *Hypsipile*, *Medea*, in *Euripides*, and in *Apollonius*, have all conspired to adorn her.—It is probable, too, that even in his own language, he found some assistance; since it is known, that *Ennius* translated the *Medea* of *Euripides*, into *Latin* verse.—The art and address employed by *Dido*, to bend *Æneas* from his purpose, are evidently copied, from the finesse and dissimulation, with which, in *Euripides*, *Medea* endeavours to work on the mind of *Jason*. *Creon* dooms the *Colchian* princess to banishment. All she can obtain, after having descended to supplications and tears, is one day, to prepare for exile.—These scenes of *Euripides*, where she endeavours to melt *Jason*, and soften *Creon*, and the moving expostulations of *Medea*, with *Jason* and the *Argonauts*, in *Apollonius*, are incorporated, to produce the pathetic addresses of *Dido* to *Æneas*.

"Tempus inane peto spatium requiemque furoris."—

The pathetic sentiments of *Dido*—"Si quis *mihi par-*"*vulus Æneas* luderet in aulâ," seems to have been suggested, by that part of the farewel address of *Jason* to *Hypsipile*, in which he directs her how to act, in the event of a son being the consequence of their loves.

With

With respect to the delineation of characters, their variety, justness, and dramatic effect, the various and appropriate features, by which they are distinguished, the grouping and contrast of the several figures, the *Grecian* poet stands preeminent, and far surpasses his *Roman* competitor. I have shown, in the paragraphs immediately preceding, how much the delineation of *Medea* excels that of *Dido*.—The character of *Æneas* appears to be modelled, in a great measure, on that of *Jason*—prudential, cautious, plausible, and selfish, with a thorough command of his passions and feelings, which are all held in due subjection, to his ambition and sense of self-interest. He affects a strain of moral sentiment, and a sanctimonious profession of piety, to conceal or justify his want of tenderness and humanity, and veil his readiness, to sacrifice every other regard and consideration, to the attainment of his main object. But *Jason* is a much more interesting object than *Æneas*—there is more boldness and gallantry in his character—the adventure on which he is bound is more hardy and romantic, than that of merely leading out a colony—he is embellished with all the graces and attractions of youth, and then he is described as little more than a stripling—we are more interested for such a gallant youth, and the attributes of personal beauty are ascribed to him, with rather more propriety, than to *Æneas*, now a widower, and father of a youth already starting up to manhood—at the same time, there is more gallantry, more tenderness, and delicacy of sentiment, in *Jason*.—*Anchises* is a good sort of old man, near his dotage, and equally infirm in body and mind, full of omens, traditions, and prophecies——*Iulus* is a giddy foolish boy, showing little worthy of the destined founder of a most illustrious race—there seems, too, to be some sort of inconsistency, in the descriptions given of him,

in different parts of the *Æneid*.——In the first book, *Cupid* assumes the form of *Iulus*, who is borne away, in the arms of *Venus—fotum gremio dea tollit in altos Idalia lucos*.—The god, in the dissembled form of the *Trojan* boy, is so small and childish in appearance, that the Queen takes him in her arms, and caresses him in her bosom, like an infant——*Reginam petit, hæc, oculis, hæc pectore toto hæret, et interdum gremio fovet*.—In subsequent books, he is represented as a grown lad——he rides out with the hunters to the chace, and manages a spirited courser—*mediis in vallibus acri gaudet equo*, and wishes to encounter the foaming wild boar—*jamque hos cursu jam præterit illos, spumantemque dari pecora inter inertia votis optat aprum*.—In the fifth book, he appears on horseback, at the head of a band of youths, in the pageant, from which the *Lusus Trojanus* is supposed to have been deduced.—*Fidus Achates*, the chief confidant of *Æneas*, and faithful friend, is like the confidants in most modern plays, but a trifling and insipid personage. Other friends of the hero have still less character and consequence assigned to them—*fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthum*.—*Lavinia* is perfectly without manners, character, and importance, or even voice, in the action —her mother *Amata* is more interesting and animated, but the interest excited by her feelings and exertions, flows from compassion for an afflicted mother, who sees her beloved daughter torn from a native prince, young, amiable, and illustrious, the beloved object of her vows and affections, and consigned by fanaticism to a needy wanderer, a foreign adventurer.—This interest is in opposition to the interest of *Æneas*, and the wishes of the poet, and has an unfavourable effect on the pathos of the story. A similar observation may be made, with respect to the character of *Turnus*. The portrait of *Turnus* is, in some measure, imitated from that of *Achilles*,

Achilles, impiger iracundus; but we are disposed to make great allowances for his youth, and disappointments of a tender passion—wounded as he is at once, in two of the tenderest points, to a gallant and generous mind, his love and his ambition, by a foreign interloper, we are disposed to pardon his violence, and sympathize in his resentments.—We find him the most amiable and unfortunate personage in the whole—we participate in his agitation, and weep over his fall.—*Camilla* is a beautiful and graceful figure, but she is manifestly sketched out, from that of *Atalanta*, in ancient story.—The characters and ardent friendship of *Nisus* and *Euryalus*, are eminently beautiful—their friendship is exclusively the thought of *Virgil*—the episode of their nocturnal sortie from the camp, seems to be imitated from the adventure of *Ulysses* and *Diomede*, in *Homer*.—The characters of *Pallas* and *Evander* are well conceived, and happily opposed to those of *Lausus* and *Mezentius*, who join *Turnus*. But, *Mezentius* is evidently copied from the portraits, in the *Grecian* drama, of the fiery, the overbearing, and impious *Capaneus*, heightened by some sentiments, taken from the speeches of the boastive and profane *Idas*, in *Apollonius Rhodius*.

The *Greek* poet has, in a narrow compass, exhibited a great variety of characters, strongly marked, and judiciously discriminated. Some are happily contrasted, as the aged *Polyxo*, with the young and tender *Hypsipile*——and the pious and gallant *Mopsus* and *Idmon*, with the arrogant and irreligious *Idas*.——In others the poet shows resemblance, accompanied by a perfect and clear distinctness.——*Æetes* and *Amycus*, for instance, resemble each other, in many particulars—strength, power, pride, personal prowess, savage ferocity, and inhospitality, towards strangers. Yet, the *Colchian* prince is distinguished, by the superior taste and

and splendour in which he lives, by the domestic circumstances of his court, by a superior degree of refinement, a deliberation in his cruelty, an artifice and dissimulation in his expressions, and the superior motives of policy, that prompt, and, in some measure, justify his antipathy to strangers.——The character of *Orpheus* is beautifully conceived, and finely delineated. The circumstance of an inspired bard, accompanied by a band of heroic adventurers, supporting their sinking courage by animated addresses—and celebrating their successful efforts, by songs of victory, is highly susceptible of poetical ornament, as may be seen, both in *Apollonius*, and the poems of *Ossian*.——I have already adverted to the character of *Medea*, at some length; in addition to what I have said, I shall point the attention of the reader, to that admirable passage, where the deep dissimulation and artifice of *Medea* are contrasted, with the shallow credulity, and simple contrivance, of *Absyrtus*.—The portrait of *Hercules* is nobly designed—his superiority to the rest of the adventurers, is fully imprest, and decidedly felt, though his stay among them is so short, which shows great art of writing in the poet.——The generous friendship, and blunt indignation of *Telamon*, ready to suspect, strong in the expressions of his feeling, and easy to be reconciled, are well opposed to the calm forbearance, and prudential reserve, of *Jason*.——The concurrence of the two daughters of *Æetas*, from different motives, in one end—the one, promoting the views of the *Argonauts*, through maternal tenderness—the other, through the influence of love; and their mutual distrust, at the commencement of their machinations—with the artful manner, in which they endeavour to sound each other, are admirably represented, and show the author's knowledge of the human heart, and power of pourtraying characters.—The

representations

representations of the good *Alcinous*, and his wife—particularly, the amiable benevolence, and soft compassion, of the latter, mixed with female artifice, and the spirit of intrigue, are beautiful pictures.—The youthful spirit, and generous indignation, of *Pollux* stepping forward to chastise the brutal insults of the savage *Amycus*. ——And the noble disregard of life, and determined gallantry, with which *Peleus* offers himself, to certain destruction, in the fatal combat, are glowing pictures, equal to any thing in *Homer*.—I shall conclude this part of my essay, with the observation of *Pope*—"The characters of *Virgil* are far from striking us, in "this open manner; they lie, in a great degree, hidden "and undistinguished, and where they are marked most "evidently, affect us not in proportion to those of "*Homer*. His characters of valour are much alike; "even that of *Turnus* seems no way peculiar, but as it "is in a different degree; and we see nothing, that dif-"ferences the courage of *Mnestheus* from that of *Ser-"gestus*, *Cloanthus*, and the rest."

In majesty of style, and dignity of manner, *Virgil* stands unequalled, among poets ancient and modern. In greatness of conception, grandeur, pomp of images, and sublimity of sentiment, *Apollonius* is by no means inferior to him.——The gods, looking down from Heaven, in admiration of the ship *Argo*, and her heroic crew—the majestic spectre of *Glaucus*, rising from the deep—the appearance of *Cybele*, on mount *Dindymus*—the character of *Hercules*—the combat of *Amycus* and *Pollux*—the dreadful passage of the *Argonauts*, through the justling rocks—the incantations of *Jason*, followed by the awful presence of *Brimo Hecatè*—the description of the labours of *Jason*, of the fiery bulls, and the armed men springing up from the furrows—the dreadful appearance of the serpent, that guarded the wonderful fleece,

fleece, and the tremendous sound of his hissing——the appearance of *Thetis*, and her sister nymphs, to extricate the vessel from the rocks——the fearful darkness, that overwhelmed the *Argonauts*, and *Apollo* shining forth in glory, to disperse it——the adventures of the *Argonauts* in *Lybia*—the destruction of *Talus*.—These may be selected, as some of the most sublime and majestic passages, in the *Argonautics*, in point of conception, imagery, and description. It is to be questioned, whether the *Æneid* furnishes an equal number of great and original passages.——Among the noble passages in *Virgil*, we may note the magnificent description of a storm, in the first book, and the appearance of *Neptune*, to quell the fury of the winds—the very beautiful passage, in the same book, which represents *Æneas*, and his companion, proceeding to *Carthage*, shrouded in a mist, cannot boast the merit of originality, since it is manifestly imitated, from the passage of *Apollonius*, where *Jason* is conducted, in like manner, to the capital of the *Colchians**—the tragical death of *Laöcoon*, and his children—the awful picture of all the hostile deities, actively employed in the destruction of *Troy*——the description of *Pyrrhus*, the death of *Priam*, and the flight of *Æneas*—of *Achæmenides*, yet, perhaps, in his picture of the miserable plight, of that unhappy man, the poet had in view the sufferings of *Phineus* in the *Argonautics*. —In point of sublimity and grandeur, the whole sixth book may be singled out, as exhibiting the strongest proofs of *Virgil's* excellence, in that department—the appearance and demeanour of the *Sibyl*—the descent of *Æneas* to the infernal realms—the description of the nether regions——the abodes of the wicked, and the pious.——The greatest part of the seventh book is un-

* The original idea is suggested by *Homer*.

commonly

commonly sublime—the direful apparition of the fury *Alecto*, her darting her snake into the bosom of *Amata*, her inflaming the soul of *Turnus*, has ever been considered, as one of the noblest efforts of the genius of *Virgil*.——It is mentioned as such by *Juvenal*, when, speaking of *Virgil*, he says—*Si Virgilio tolerabile deesset hospitium caderent omnes a crinibus Hydri—surda nil gemeret grave Buccina—qualis Rutulam confundat Erinnys.* If *Virgil* had wanted the luxuries and indulgencies of life, his poetical spirit would have failed.——That is a passage of resplendent and glorious sublimity, in which *Alecta* is represented as taking her station, and maddening the general mind, with the *Tartarean* sound of her infernal horn, *Tartarea tromba*, as the *Italian* poet calls *—cornuque recurvo Tartaream intendit vocem.*——Yet, *Virgil* is here indebted, for his idea of the dreadful and appalling sound of the infernal trump; and, particularly, for the beautiful and tender circumstance, of the mother clasping her infant to her bosom; to the noble description given by *Apollonius*, of the serpent which guarded the fleece, and of the consternation diffused by the horrid noise of his hissing (see *Argonautics*, B. IV. v. 127.*)—*et trepidæ matres presserunt ad ubera natos.*—The combat of *Hercules* and *Cacus*, in the eighth book, is particularly sublime; and the character of *Evander*, dignified in poverty, and rising superior to wealth and power, is nobly supported—*Res inopes Evandrus habebat—aude, hospes, contemnere opes, et te quoque dignum finge deo.*—The unaffected majesty, and rustic state, of

* *Heyne* remarks, with some justice, on a comparison of the two passages—that there is more probability in the description of *Virgil*, and that such an appalling sound is more justly ascribed to the horn of the fury, than to the hiss of the serpent.

the venerable chieftain, are truly fine and beautiful.—— The remaining four books of the *Æneid* are, in my mind, much inferior to those which precede them, and present few passages, which deserve to be arranged under the head of distinguished greatness and sublimity.

With the character of majesty in the poetry of *Virgil*, there is something most amiable and graceful, a mild and composed spirit, a sedate dignity, and noble simplicity. His poetical ornaments are of the most exquisite kind, and are introduced, with peculiar grace and propriety, while nothing is forced, nothing affected. How apt and natural are his sentiments! how happily does he avoid the extremes of the meagre and deficient, the plethoric and redundant! How have *Statius*, *Valerius Flaccus*, and *Claudian* failed, in their attempts to emulate *Virgil!* in his march to this eminence of propriety and perfection—this delicacy of manner, and refinement of taste; *Virgil* was inspired and guided, by the example and practice of the correct and elaborate poets of the *Alexandrine* school—the praise, and merit, of the *Roman* poet, did not so much consist in the powers of original invention, as in the faculty of selecting and transferring to his own use, with all the facility and sagacity of genius, the inventions of others.—The *Alexandrine* poets, *Callimachus*, *Apollonius*, *Aratus*, *Nicander*, and *Theocritus*, must be considered, as the parents, who originated the genius and spirit of a more exquisite poetical style and manner, which exhibit a high finishing, polish, and neatness, in admirable grace, and perfection of ornament, united with the utmost simplicity and purity, the happy result of emulation, learning, and elegant society, in an opulent and refined court, calling forth the choicest exertions of superior talent.——Thus, they happily succeeded, in tempering the swelling pomp of the tragic writers, with the magnificent

nificent simplicity, and noble negligence of *Homer*, so as to mingle solemnity with elegance, and dignity with beauty.

Virgil's management of the fine episode of *Dido*, illustrates his manner of imitation. The beauty of the episode in *Apollonius*, had taught the *Roman* poet how the passion of love might be treated of, with effect, and ornament; but *Virgil* (it is said) has in some respects far surpast his predecessor—and this he has accomplished, as *Heyne* remarks, by two means—partly, by transfusing from the tragic writers into his poem, the gravity and atrocity, which they ascribed to the passion of love*—partly, by venturing to turn aside from the simplicity, and plainness of manners, attributable to the heroic ages, and passing to a more elaborate and cultivated form of society, which was susceptible of more of the decorums of conduct, the delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of passion.——Such is the praise of the good Professor. If his latter position is founded in fact, it may be questioned, whether his praise is just.——May it not be said, that the poet is guilty of a moral anachronism, a violation of costumè, who departs from the manners appropriate to the age in which his actors are placed, by historical destination, or the hypothesis of the fable, and ascribes to persons, who are supposed to live, in heroic ages, a greater refinement of sentiment, feeling of decorum, and dignity of manners, than belong to the times?——In fact, the very subject of the Professor's praise may be objected to *Virgil;* and he is, perhaps, censurable, for a disregard of costumè, by ascribing to the personages of an age, the customs and manners of which are described and ascertained by *Homer;* and may be con-

* In the fables of *Phedra*, *Thyestes*, *Egistheus*, *Medea*, *Deianira*.

sidered,

sidered, as chronicled and recorded, a greater decorum and propriety, a correctness of sentiment and manners, that are the creatures of modern ages, and a refined state of society; and showing a courtly education, and an extensive knowledge of the world, in the heroic ages.——But, secondly, the good Professor is not founded in his assertion, that *Virgil* has surpassed all his predecessors, in dignity of manners, and refinement of sentiment.——On the contrary, *Virgil* seems to be equalled, if not surpast, in these particulars, by *Apollonius*—in particular, *Jason* shows more refined sensibility, more of gallantry, and the spirit of chivalry.

Among the principal perfections of *Virgil's* poetry, we have already noted the clearness of his conceptions, his graphical talent, his skill in selecting and combining circumstances, and his luminous display of images, incidents, and emotions ——Much of this graphical talent depends on the excellence of his poetical diction, the beauty, the elegance, and majesty of which, are unequalled. We find in him a curious felicity, the offspring of united genius, to conceive and express happily, and taste and industry, to refine and beautify afterwards, by repeated touches of patient correctness. In this happy combination of thought and expression, consist the elegance and force which may be felt, but cannot well be described—the balmy essence of beauty and grace, too volatile to be transfused, too subtle to be fixed or analysed, by which we are struck, we are charmed, we scarce know how.—Hence result the uncommon charms of picturesque language—the thoughts that breathe, and words that burn, while an epithet is a complete picture, a single expression, a word, is tantamount, in force, to a whole sentence. From his supereminence in these perfections, *Virgil* becomes an author most difficult to translate or imitate; and the same may be

be said of *Apollonius*. It is next to impossible to transfer into another language, that exquisite poetical colouring, those graces which seem to be inimitable hues.—What tints, what art of the painter, can fully imitate the delightful carnation of nature, where the pure and eloquent blood speaks in the cheek?—Many great and illustrious painters have arisen—the hand only of *Titian* could rival nature in this respect.

Yet, even here, we must, in great measure, withhold from *Virgil* the palm of originality.—In his diction, as well as in his other excellencies, he is very much the child of imitation.—It must be owned, however, that, in what he has borrowed from preceding poets, he displays a taste and judgment, which claim a praise nearly equal to that of original invention.—*Apollonius*, the favourite poet of *Virgil*, was his great master, in elaborate correctness, and in picturesque and poetic diction.

It is said of *Homer*, in the admirable preface of *Pope*—"We acknowledge him the father of poetical dic-" tion; the first, who taught the language of the gods " to men. His expression is like the colouring of some " great master, which discovers itself to be laid on " boldly, and executed with great rapidity. It is, in-" deed, the strongest and most glowing imaginable, " and touched, with the greatest spirit.—To throw his " language more out of prose, *Homer* affected com-" pound epithets. This not only heightened the dic-" tion, but filled the numbers with greater sound and " pomp, and contributed, in some measure, to thicken " the images."—Yet, further to enrich his language, to attain a more poetical diction, and to render his versification more musical and sonorous, he availed himself of the introduction of different dialects, so that, although the predominant was the poetical *Ionic*, he borrowed from

from each, all that was most exquisitely grateful to the ear, and best adapted to the use of poetry.

Apollonius Rhodius judiciously perceived, that it was not allowable, for every warrior, to wear the armour of *Achilles*—for every archer to bend the bow of *Ulysses*. He felt, that an inferior bard must not venture to employ those expedients, or claim those privileges, which seemed to belong exclusively to the mighty father of epic song, and required the transcendent abilities of an *Homer*, to justify their use by success. He saw, that, by attempting such expedients, he should not, in the first place, have the merit of originality; and, in the next, that he could not expect to reach *Homer*, in his peculiar walk; but must be content, to follow him —*haud passibus æquis*; and, at best, acquire the name of a feeble and unequal copyist.—He wisely saw, and pursued, the path, that yet lay open before him. He avoided the hazardous competition with a sovereign, who reigned in legitimate and undisputed authority, and determined to explore for himself new regions, and new possessions.——He resolved to seize the glory, which might be acquired by more exquisite and fanciful inventions, by more recherché ornaments, more refined sentiments, by superlative grace and beauty of diction, an elaborate and masterly refinement, and sweetness in versification. Unequal to *Homer*, in the fierce and aspiring flame of invention, *Apollonius*, and his pupil *Virgil*, pursued a different course and aim, and acquired an equal degree of fame, but of a different character and tone.—From a curious felicity of expression, a research through all the stores of language, for what was most clear, exquisite, expressive, and majestic—for the undescribable and incommunicable graces—for the silence that is eloquent, the words that live and glow, the epithets that paint

paint—the happy arrangement of selected words—the graceful collocation of harmonious sentences—the most pure and dignified forms of speech, such as were suited to the courtly, learned, and distinguishing ear. It was here, that the strength and skill, the artifice and industry, the soul of taste, the consummate mastery in all the witchcraft of words, were displayed by these exquisite writers.

Virgil found himself precluded, by the genius of the *Roman* language, from the use of various dialects, had he been disposed to employ them. He fully compensated for this want, by the resources of his own taste and genius.—*Apollonius* was his guide and example, in the momentous and laborious task, of perfecting his diction, and harmonizing his versification, until the former acquired a force and energy; the latter, a pomp and sweetness, a grace and expressive appropriateness, unequalled by any poet, ancient or modern, if we except *Apollonius*, on whom he formed himself, by a diligent and incessant perusal. This unremitting study of the *Alexandrian* poet will appear, not only, by the multitude of passages, which the great *Roman* has adopted or imitated, but still more by their close resemblance, and identification of style and manner, as far as the genius of their respective languages will allow. *Virgil* seems to have transfused into himself the very life-blood of *Apollonius*.—The departed soul of that poet, seems to return, and live, and actuate his *Mantuan* disciple and admirer, by a sort of poetical transmigration.

Among the kindred excellencies of *Virgil* and *Apollonius*, the praise of versification seems to be peculiarly and exclusively their own. All that an ear, harmonized by the finest feelings of nature, and methodized and regulated by study and practice, can produce, appears in their works. I have already observed, that

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our kindred bards possessed peculiar and similar advantages of situation, which called out, and expanded, in a distinguished manner, certain parts or exertions of the innate talents, with which they were gifted. Other poets may, perhaps, have been as liberally endowed by nature, but being less fortunately circumstanced, their talents have lain for ever dormant, and died with them, unhonoured and unknown, merely for want of proper example, cultivation, and encouragement.——In fact, *Apollonius* may be considered, as a sort of middle term, a bond of connexion between *Homer* and *Virgil*, in the use of a more florid and ornate style, of more remote and exquisite metaphors, of greater attention in the choice of words, greater care, in the construction and arrangement of sentences; but, above all, in the artifices, and enchanting craft of versification. An art, in which all the writers of the *Alexandrian* school, and especially *Theocritus* and *Callimachus*,* were supereminent.

Among the judicious artifices, and scientific refinements, that contribute to the perfection of versification, in *Virgil* and *Apollonius*, the reader will observe, that they have directed their attention, with uncommon solicitude, to the pursuit of three principal objects.——Objects, which they are enabled effectually to obtain, by a consummate knowledge of language, under the direction of a learned and judicious ear.—The selection and employment of smooth and melodious, and nobly-sounding words, that facilitate the work of harmonious and majestic versification—the judicious use of the cesura, and the artful introduction of the second pause and cesura —the endeavour to make the sound an echo to the sense.

* Among the many instances of this excellence, in *Callimachus*, are his verses on the eruptions of *Ætna*.

The

First, as to the selection of harmonious and poetical words, that is to say, of words, which in themselves, and singly taken, give a noble and grateful sound, run easily into versification, and form musical lines.—This requires a complete knowledge of the wealth and resources, the powers and varieties of language, regulated by a critical ear; qualities, which *Apollonius* and *Virgil* eminently possessed.—The words, which offer themselves to the choice of the poet, are polysyllables; since, by the use of them, there is greater opportunity given to vary the pause, and employ that artful cesura, on which we shall touch hereafter. Monosyllable words seldom are so smooth in themselves, as the syllables, which form part of polysyllables, the latter usually have a smoother, and also a nobler sound, than an equal number of letters and syllables disposed into monosyllables—besides, even the smoothest monosyllables, disposed in a line wholly composed of such words, will produce a repetition of hiatus, a succession of pauses, like so many stepping stones, unavoidably introduced, notwithstanding the utmost care of the author, and the reader or reciter. To accomplish this selection, and place at the disposal of the poet, a due number of melodious and high-sounding words, fit for the purposes of harmony, and falling readily into the ranks of versification, engaged much of the care of the *Alexandrine* writers. Two expedients were adopted by them, for this purpose—the frequent and free use, and even accumulation of epithets—and the copious introduction of the appellations of divine personages, and the proper names of persons and places. The latter device was much forwarded, by their learning, and the intimate knowledge of genealogy, and the details of fabulous history and mythology. *Virgil* has closely followed the example of these writers, in the abundant use of epithets, and proper names, which he has employed

ployed with the happiest effect, and the utmost advantage to his versification. *Apollonius* was not the first, who availed himself of this resource——we find *Callimachus* is very fond of introducing a long collection of sounding names——the practice might have been first suggested to him, by a perusal of the *Orphic* hymns; but, I am persuaded, that he was induced to persevere in it, by his perceiving it to be so productive of harmonious versification. In this practice, he and his imitators have been followed by many of the modern poets, who have succeeded best in the province of versification. For specimens of the accumulation of epithets, we may turn to any of the *Orphic* hymns at random.

—— Ηλιυ θυμιαμα
" Ευδρομε ροιζωτηρ πυρωεις φαιδρωπε διφρευτα."

—— " Ὠρότροφε κυρε
" Κοσμοκρατωρ, συρικτα, πυριδρομε κυκλοελικτε
" Φωσφορε αιολοδικτε φερεσ βιε καρπιμε παιαν."

—— " Φαεσφορη δια σεληνη
" Ταυροκερως μηνη νυκτιδρομη ηεροφοιτι
" Εννυχιη, δαδυχη κορη ενασερη μηνη."

So in *Callimachus* we have——

" Πηλογονων ελατηρα δικασπολον Ουρανιδησι
" Πως και νιν Δικταιον ἀεισομεν ηε λυκαιοι——
" Ωγυγιον καλευσι λεχωιον Απιδανηεσ
" Δικταιαι μελιαι σε δε κοιμισεν Αδρηςεια
" Ιδαιοις εν ορεσσι τα τε κλειυσι Πανακρα
" Φοιβον και νομιον κικλησκομεν εξ ἑτι κεινυ.
" Εξοτ' ἐπ' Αμφρυσω ζευγητιδας ἑτρεφεν ἱππυς."

Milton, who studied the *Alexandrine* poets, with much diligence, never expatiates with more delight, than when

when he gets into a strain of this kind, where ancient mythology supplies him, with a number of smooth and sounding epithets, or proper names.——As—

" Whose annual wound in *Lebanon* allur'd
" *Assyrian* damsels, to lament his fate,
" In amorous ditties, all a summer's day;
" While smooth *Adonis*, from his native rock,
" Ran purple to the sea, suppos'd with blood
" Of *Thammuz* yearly wounded."

Again——

—— " Where old *Cham*,
" Whom *Gentiles Ammon* call, and *Lybian Jove*
" Hid *Amalthea*, and her florid son,
" Young *Bacchus*, from his stepdame *Rhea's* eye."—
" In *Vallombrosa*, where th' *Etrurian* shades
" High over-arch'd embower."——
" When *Charlemagne*, with all his peerage, fell.
—— " By *Fontarabia*,
" *Marocco*, or *Damasco*, or *Trebisond*."

Akenside, who studied the ancients, and imitated them almost to pedantry, and has versified, with uncommon ease and smoothness, pursues the example of the *Alexandrine* school, in the abundant use of epithets, and proper names of persons. In doing this, *Milton* and he were not merely guided, by a blind devotion to their classic models—they perceived, that proper names, and personal epithets, are usually polysyllables, being derived from a combination of qualities; and, that in general, they are also smoother than other words. We have many examples, in the *Hymn* to the *Naiades*, of *Akenside*, which is versified with a most refined and studious attention to harmony.

" Then

—— " Then social reign'd
" The kindred powers—*Tethys* and reverend *Ops*,
" And spotless *Vesta*."

Again——

—— " *Arethusa* fair
" And tuneful *Aganippe*, that sweet name
" *Bandusia*, the soft family, which dwelt
" With *Syrian Daphne*, and the honour'd tribes
" Below'd of *Pæan*."

—— " *Amalthea* pours
" Well-pleas'd, the wealth of that *Ammonian* horn."

—— " Fragrant isles
" *Nysæan* or *Atlantic*."

—— " O'er the *Batic* vale,
" Or thro' the tow'rs of *Memphis*, and the palms,
" By sacred *Ganges* water'd."

—— " With the buxom fleece
" Of fertile *Ariconium*, while she clothes
" *Sarmatian* kings."

In *Virgil* we find innumerable instances, of the same management——as—

—— " *Italiam* fato profugus
" *Lavinaque* venit."

—— " *Tyrii* tenuere coloni
" *Carthago*, *Italiam* contra *Tiberinaque* longe."

" Judicium *Paridis* spretæque injuria formæ,
" Et genus invisum, et rapti *Ganymedis* honores."

" Una *Eurusque*, *Notusque* ruunt, creberque procellis
" *Africus*."

—— " *Lycios* fidumque vehebat *Orontem*."

" Jam

—— " Jam fortis *Achatæ*
" Et quâ vectus *Abas*, et quâ grandævus
" *Alethes*."

" *Cymothoe* simul et *Triton* adnixus acuto."—
" Aut *Capys* aut celsis in puppibus arma *Caici*."—
" Fata *Lyci*, fortemque *Gyan*, fortemque *Cloanthum*."
" Cana *Fides*, et *Vesta*, *Remo* cum fratre *Quirinus*."
" Cum domus *Assaraci Pthiam* clarasque *Mycenas*."
" Atridas, *Priamumque*, et sævum ambobus
" *Achillem*."
" Qualis in *Eurotæ* ripis, aut per juga *Cynthi*
" Exercet *Diana choros*."—
" Ducit *Amazonidum* lunatis agmina peltis
" *Penthesilea* furens."—
" Antea *Sergestumque*, videt fortemque *Cloanthum*."—
" *Arcturum*, pluviasque *Hyadas*, geminosque *Triones*."
" Heic *Dolopum* manus, heic sævus tendebat *Achilles*."
" Quos neque *Tydides*, nec *Larissæus Achilles*."—
" *Tisandrus Sthenelusque* duces, et dirus *Ulysses*
" Demissum lapsi per funem *Athamasque*, *Thoasque*,
" *Peleidesque Neoptolemus*, primusque *Machaon*
" Et *Menelaus*, et ipse doli fabricator *Epeus*."

It is unnecessary to multiply quotations—the reader will see, in this large collection of lines, taken indiscriminately from two or three books only out of *Virgil*, that epithets and proper names, among the *Greeks* especially, are almost always polysyllables, and invariably smooth—that *Virgil* was very fond of introducing them, and showed his judgment in so doing, since the lines, which are wholly, or in great measure, composed of them,

would induce, the ancient musicians devised two expedients, the intermixture of different feet, and another, which was still more ingenious and exquisite, the greatest imaginable variety in the disposition of the pause, and the management of the *Cæsura*,* as it is called by grammarians; by which is meant, such a selection or division of the verse, as, after a foot is completed, ends in a succeeding syllable, and shuts in the voice, and gives, as it were, a breathing space. This pause most usually takes place, after the second or third foot is completed; but it sometimes is placed after the second, or the fourth. The use of the cesura invariably occurs, in every hexameter verse, and in the variation of it, so that the ear shall not be palled with a repetition of similar sounds, much of the art of versification consists—from thence the happiest effect results.—In addition to the cesura, it has the happiest effect imaginable, when, in scanning the line, all the feet are found to run into each other, and thus to be so mutually linked together, that the whole line forms, as it were, a chain, where every intermediate part is inserted into that which precedes, and that which follows—whereas, no structure of hexameter verse is so bad, as that where all the feet stand separate and independent of each other; indeed, such is the force and beauty of the cesura, that a verse can hardly be considered, as legitimate without it.—From what has been said, the reader will perceive the importance, of employing polysyllable words in poetical composition; how much it contributes, not only to facilitate the observation and proper disposition of the cesura, but, also, in addition, to promote the graceful enchain-

* The cesura has place in every language, and in the learned languages, in every kind of metre, the anapæstic excepted, and verses of that sort.

ment

ment, or mutual implication of the feet. In a verse, wholly composed of monosyllables, it is self-evident, that there can be no cesura, and, of course, that such a verse can scarcely be admitted in correct composition. As the harmony of verse is considerably assisted, by varying the pause, so the verse is damaged, by the use of low and feeble words; and monosyllables most frequently are such.

"Ten low words oft creep in one dull line."*

Dryden observes, a line of monosyllables is always harsh. This implication of the feet, one with another, produces, of course, a second pause, or cesura, falling near the close of the line, which gives an inconceivable grace and sweetness to the versification. The force and effect of this must strike the ear of every judicious reader. He will perceive, in reading over a number of *Greek* or *Latin* hexameters, that those are the most perfect and sweet sounding lines, where the second cesura occurs. And he will perceive, also, by recurring to *Apollonius* and *Virgil*, that a great proportion of their lines are of this description; a proof of their attention to harmonious versification.——Every page affords instances of this; and it will appear, that the lines which exhibit the double cesura, are, uniformly, the most flowing and melodious.—As, for example—

"Αργοθεν αυ Ταλαος και Αρηιος υιε βιαντος—
"Αιολιδης ςαθμοισιν εν Ιφικλοιο Μελαμπους—
"Γειναλο κυδαλιμοις εναριθμιον Αιολιδησι—
"Συν δε Περικλυμενος Νηλιμος ωρτο νεεσθαι—
"Ταιναρον αυτ' επι τοισι λιπων Πολυφημος ικανε—
"Και δ' αλλω δυο παιδε Ποσειδαωνος ικαλο."—

* See Dr. *Johnson's* excellent essay on versification, in the *Ramblers*.

" Ζῆτης ἀυ Καλαις τε βορηιοι υιες ικοντο—
" Ὁι δε τεως μακαρεσσι Θεοῖς Τιτασιν ανασσον."—

" Multa viri virtus animo multusq; recursat—
" Verbaque nec placidam membris dat cura quietem."

" Credo equidem, nec vana fides genus esse deorum
" Si non pertæsum *Thalami* tædæque fuisset."—

" Sola ne perpetuâ, mœrens carpere juventâ
" Legiferæ *Cereri*, *Phœboque*, patrique *Lyæo*—
" Talibus orantem dictis arasque tenentem
" Enumerare vales nunquam regina negabo."

The reader will also observe, that, by way of varying the pause, and giving greater compass to the modulation, lines of this description, are intermixed with those which have but one cesura; and this is not done at random, or carelessly, but, with an exquisite attention to the general effect, in the production of harmony. In addition to this artifice of verifications, we learn, from the precepts of *Dionysius* of *Halicarnassus*, of *Cicero*, and *Quintilian*, how exact the ancients were, in the choice and disposition of words, to consult harmony, and gratify the refined ear, by the succession and intermixture of different vowels, and the more frequent recurrence of such as give a full and more lofty sound. The inspection of a few pages of *Apollonius* and *Virgil*, will demonstrate how critical and attentive they were, in this particular; so as to guard against all cacophony, by a sedulous choice, and judicious arrangement of words.—— " And that the syllables themselves are so chosen, as " to flow smoothly into each other, by a proportionate " mixture of vowels and consonants, and by tempering " the mute consonants with liquids and semivowels."*

* See Dr. *Johnson's* observations on versification, in the *Rambler*. Yet,

Yet, *Virgil* will sometimes, on principle, violate all the common received rules of correct versification, in order to attain a particular beauty, or to excite a particular idea—thus, to give an idea of the sudden fall of the ox, with startling sound, he closes the line, in an unusual manner, with a monosyllable—*Procumbit humi bos.*—So, to express the burst of a pack of dogs—*Odora canum vis*——and the sudden falling of the shades of night—*Vertitur interea cælum et ruit oceano nox.*—There is nothing in the art of versifying,* (says Dr. *Johnson*, most of whose criticisms are highly instructive and just,) so much exposed to the power of the imagination, as the accommodation of the sound to the sense, or the representation of particular images, by the flow of the verse, in which they are expressed.—*Homer*, the father of all poetical beauty, has been celebrated by *Dionysius* of *Halicarnassus*, as the poet, who exhibited the greatest variety of sound.—There are, says he, innumerable passages, in which length of time, bulk of body, extremity of passion, stillness of repose—or brevity, speed, and eagerness, are evidently marked out, by the sound of the syllables.—The learned critic instances the verses, where the blind *Polyphemus* is represented, as groping out the entrance of his cave.—It is not to be doubted, continues this great critic, that *Virgil*, who wrote amidst the light of criticism, and owed much of his success to art and labour, endeavoured, among other excellencies, to exhibit this similitude; nor has he been less happy in this than in other graces of versification. —The same may be said, with equal truth, of *Apollonius Rhodius.*—The resemblance of poetical numbers, to the subject they describe, is either general or particular, says Dr. *Johnson.*——The flow or structure of a whole

* See the papers on versification, in the *Rambler*, by Dr. *Johnson*.

passage—the cadence and harmony of a single verse—or the sound of some emphatic and descriptive word—of which there are many in every language—such as *roizein*, *mormurein*, *psitharizein*, *knossein*, in *Greek*—*murmur*, *susurrus*, *beatus*, *balatus*, *ululatus*, in *Latin*—to kiss, to hiss, bawl, jar, scratch, grating, harsh, in *English*.——But the use of words of this kind is generally involuntary, and independant of the art of the poet; it shows more skill by the flow of the versification, the disposition of the pauses, the arrangement of whole lines and sentences, to express the rapt, hurried, and precipitate——the slow and solemn——the melancholy or majestic—the soft and voluptuous—the heavy and labouring—and even, by choice, sometimes to admit the harsh and grating, according to the ever varying spirit of the subject matter—thus, to express the sound of an arrow flying, *Virgil* has a line of unusual harshness——

"Fugit horrendum stridens elapsa sagitta."

To express the confusion and bewildered stare of *Sinon*, he has a line of unusual construction, where open vowels meet, and a spondee occurs, in the fifth place; and the expression is pleonastic.

"Constitit, atque oculis *Phrygia* agmina circumspexit."

There is a noble passage in *Callimachus*, hymn to *Diana*, verse 54, *et sequentes*, where the poet describes the *Cyclops* at work, in the caverns of mount *Ætna*, and the verses, both by a selection of apt words, and correspondent flow of the lines, happily express the alternate sound of the vast hammers on the anvils, and the rebellowing of the crater, and the contiguous shores of *Sicily* and *Italy*. There can be no doubt, then, that

Apollonius

Apollonius and *Virgil* aimed at this excellence.—We find, that when they wish to excite the ideas of supernatural beauty, and celestial grace, the lines are laboured into an extraordinary degree of harmony.—— Thus, Book I. l. 221, we find the description of *Calais* and *Zetes*, the winged pair——

" Χρυσειαις φολιδεσσι διαυγεας αμφι δε νωτοις
" Κρααλτο· εξ υπαλοιο και αυχενο· ενθα και ενθα
" Κυανεαι δονεοντο μετα πνοῖησιν ενθειραι."

So, again, speaking of the beauty of *Jason*, v. 774.

" Βηδ' ιμεναι προτι Ασυ φαεινω αςερι ισο·
" 'Ον ρα τε νηγαλεησι ἑεργομεναι καλυβησιν
" Νυμφαι θηησαντο δομων υπεραντελλοντα
" Και σφισι κυανεοιο δι' ηερο· ομματα θελγει
" Καλον ἠρευθομενο· γανυται δε τε ηιθεοιο
" Παρθενο· ιμειρουσα μετ' αλλοδαποισιν ἐοντο·," &c.

Again, Book III. v. 443.

" Θεσπεσιον δ' εν πασι μετεπρεπεν Αισονο· υιο·
" Καλλει και χαριτεσσιν εν αὐτω δ' ομματα κυρη
" Λοξα παρα λιπαρην σχομενη θηειτο καλυπτρην."

Virgil, to express a similar subject, elaborates his numbers with singular harmony.

" Os humerosque deo similis: namque ipsa decoram
" *Cæsariem* nato genetrix, lumenque juventæ
" Purpureum, et lætos oculis adflarat honores."
Book I. v. 589.

" Qualis ubi hibernam *Lyciam*, *Xanthique* fluenta
" Deserit, ac *Delum* maternam invisit *Apollo*
" Instauratque choros mixtique altaria circum
" *Cretesque*, *Dryopesque* fremunt, pictique *Agathyrsi*.
" Ipse

"Ipse jugis *Cynthi* graditur, mollique fluentem
"Fronde premit crinem fingens, atque implicat auro."
Book IV. v. 143, *et sequentes*.

Apollonius has exprest the harmony of the strains of *Orpheus*, and their effect, in lines of such sweetness, as evidently show design and poetical artifice.—Book I. v. 569.

"Τοισι δε φορμιζων ενθημονι μελπεν αοιδη
"Οιαγροιο παις νηοσσοον ἐυπαλερειαν
"Αρτεμιν, ἡ κεινας σκοπιας ἁλος αμφιεπεσκε."

We see here the skilful combination of vowels and liquids.—So, where *Medea* is described, as putting the wakeful dragon to sleep.

"Βαπτους' ἐκ κυκεωνος ακερατα φαρμακ' αοιδαις
"Ραινε κατ' οφθαλμων περιτἀμφι νηριτος οδμη
"Φαρμακου υπνον εβαλλε."—Book IV. v. 157.

The tranquillity of the scene, and the seductive influence, as the *Argonauts* pass the isle of the *Sirens*, are described in verses, that flow with a certain corresponding languid sweetness.

"Νηαδ' ἐϋκραης ανεμος φερεν αιψα δε νησον
"Καλην ἀνθεμοεσσαν εσεδρακον ἐνθα λιγειαι
"Σειρηνες σινοντ' αχελωιδες ηδειησι
"Θελγουσαι μολπησιν ὁτις παρα πεισμα βαλοιτο.—
"Τηκεδονι θινυθουσαι, απηλεγεως δ' αρα και τοις
"Ιεσαν εκ στοματων ὁπα λειριον οἱδ' ἀπο νηος
"Ηδη πεισματ' εμελλον ἐπ' ηιονεσσι βαλεσθαι."
Book IV. v. 891.

How different is the cadence of the lines, which express the quick and sounding strains which *Orpheus* employed as a preservative!—See the lines that follow——

"Κραιπνον

" Κραιπνον ἐϋτροχαλοιο μελος καναχησεν ἀοιδης
" Οφρ' αμιδις κλονεοντες επι βρομεωνται ἀκυαι
" Κρεγμω παρθενικην δ' ενοπην εβιησατο φορμιγξ."

How expressive of plaintive melody are these lines of *Virgil!*—*Georgic*, Book IV. v. 474.

" Ipsa cavâ solans ægrum testudine amorem,
" Te dulcis conjux, te solo in litore secum,
" Te veniente die, te decedente canebat."

How well do the repetitions accord, with the reiterated strains of the mournful bard!——The song of *Iopas*, which was of a different character, is mentioned in lines of a different cadence.—*Æneid*, Book I. v. 740.

—— " *Citharâ* crinitus *Jopas*
" Personat aurata docuit quæ maximus *Atlas*.
" Hic canit errantem lanam solisque labores;
" Unde hominum genus, et pecudes, unde imber et ignes;
" Arcturum, pluviasque *Hyadas*, geminosque *Triones*;
" Quid tantum oceano properent setingere soles
" *Hiberni*, vel quæ tardis mora noctibus obstet."

Here the measure is bold, swelling, and sonorous; such as was the descant of the *Tyrian* minstrel.

Again, to express the bewildered stare of astonishment, and confusion of *Sinon*, standing and gaping around on the croud of *Trojans*, he introduces what is considered as, in general, destructive of harmony, and incompatible with good versification, a pause in the very close of the line. He also resorts to another unusual expedient, by employing a spondee in the fifth, as well as in the sixth place of the line.—*Æneid*, B. II. v. 68.

" Constitit atque oculis *Phrygia Agmina* circumspexit"

The

The hiatus, also, in the words *Phrygia Agmina*, is observable, as adding to the expressive effect of this admirable verse. And, I am persuaded, no impartial reader can suppose, that all these circumstances of departure, from the received mode of versification, are merely fortuitous.

If we now proceed to compare *Virgil* and *Apollonius*, with respect to language and diction, we shall find there a resemblance equally strong. The same curious felicity, and elegant choice of words, which steers a happy medium, in avoiding at once colloquial and prosaic phrases and expressions, and those which are bombastic and pedantic. They have shown an exquisite knowledge of their respective languages, their powers, and capabilities. They have wielded, with equal mastery, in their immortal works, the poetical instruments which were put into their hands. They were able to penetrate to the hidden wealth of the *Greek* and *Roman* tongues; to search for it, in the rich mines of the learned writers, who had preceded them, and to mould and fashion the ore into the best forms, for the embellishment of their poems. Their poetical art and skill, with respect to phrase, construction, and single words, were exerted for two purposes—the attainment of superior harmony, and musical expression, in versification; and the improvement of poetical diction, the attainment of a certain nobleness, and unaffected elevation; a certain graphical distinctness, a picturesque precision of apposite epithet and nomenclature, in speaking of external things, and the objects of sense; together with a more forcible, pointed, and heart-felt expression, of sentiments and passions. In this they have succeeded, beyond all degree and probability of competition, from poets, either ancient or modern. A full discussion of this

this branch of comparison, would necessarily lead to a minute examination, of the phraseology and diction of *Apollonius Rhodius* and *Virgil*. This is a subject, which, in itself, would require a volume—and highly instructive and interesting; and a most acceptable present, to the literary world, would such a volume prove, from the pen of a critic adequate to the task. Such an undertaking would give an intimate knowledge, a complete mastery of the *Greek* and *Roman* languages; and a perfect and familiar acquaintance, with the productions of the two admirable poets of whom I speak. Many of the most important secrets of composition would be revealed, in the progress of such a work.—Many of the most delicate and fugitive graces of composition, would be caught and fixed. I am far, very far, indeed, from possessing the requisite information, and learning, had I the leisure requisite for such an attempt—the task is worthy of the erudition of an accomplished scholar, like Dr. *Parr*. I proceed to remark some few of the many expedients, which were employed by these consummate masters in their art, to raise their language above common speech, to render it more expressive, more forcible, more picturesque. The first expedient, employed by them, consists in the happy contrivance, and frequent use, of epithets—which furnished them with a choice of noble and well-sounding words, gave a poetical richness, a state and majesty to their language, and enabled them to produce the picturesque in a high degree. Among other similarities, in the artifice of their composition, the reader will observe, the frequent reduplication, or accumulation, of two epithets in the same line. This practice, under the management of unskilful and injudicious writers, would produce a florid and plethoric luxuriance. By the poets before us, it is

so judiciously employed, that it is productive neither of weakness nor redundancy.

"Γηθυςυνοι φορεοντο παρα ποσιδηιον ἀκρην.—
"Ριγιςη παντεσσιν ὀπιδοτατη τε τετυκται—
"Μειοτερος λευκησιν ελισσεται εις ἀλα διναις—
"Ζηνος ευξοινοιο γενεταιην υπερ ἀκρην."

"Dives opum studiisque asperrima belli—
"Populum late regem belloque superbum—
"Summâ placidum caput extulit undâ—
"*Scyllæam* rabiem, penitusque sonantes.
"Classem in convexo nemorum sub rupe cavatâ,
"Ambrosiæque divinum vertice odorem—
"Modis attollens pallida miris."

Another means of elevating their language, and removing it from the tame familiarity of colloquial use, is the employment of adjectives in a substantive sense, and applying substantives as epithets.——Use of adjective to signify substantively both the substratum and its attribute——as, παντα δαιδαλα χαλκευεν—ἠθειαι τις δευρο νοος—κομιζει δηναιας ἀυτως—Κυπρις—εφεςιον ἀθανατοισιν—ἀφατον κακον (a wicked devil)—θηλυτεραι, *feminæ*——*pulchrum mori succurrit in armis. Ignaros loci passim et formidine captos sternimas—armatos vident stantes*——*cælicolæ*, for deities.—The patronymic used as a substantive—*Tyndaridis facies invisa Lacenæ.*——Σκοπιην ὀρεος, *speculum montis, pro monte aerio*—παρθενος ἑλλη, *virgo Hellé*——ζηνι ἀνακτι, *Jovi regi*—πασα περαιη θρηικιης, *populum late regem.*

This is done, for the most part, by turning the noun adjective into a substantive, denoting the accident or quality positively, and making it govern, in the genitive case, the substantive, which denotes the substratum, or subject

subject matter.——Or, again, this practice may be reversed, and the noun substantive, denoting attribute, quality, origin, proprietorship, is converted into an adjective of corresponding number, which is made to agree with the noun, denoting the substratum, or subject matter. And this is the more frequently practised, particularly with *Apollonius;* and it has generally the advantage, of increasing the number of syllables, in one of the words, and is thus subservient to the harmony and facility of versification.——Thus, too, circumlocution is often avoided——ἀρτεμις πολιηοχος——χειμεριη ἁλμη——ευρυνομη ωκεανις——λικταιον σπεος——γηγενεες κυκλωπες κλιτεα παλληναια——κρηταιον ἀντρον——*Scyllæa rabies—Argolica tela—Pelopea mænia—stuppea vincula—priameia virgo——Iliaci cineres——plangoribus ædes fæmineis ululant—ædibus in mediis—Dardanium litus——deos in Dardana suscitat arma.*—Another circumstance, in which the grace and art of composition may be observed, is a certain happy boldness, in the application of verbs in a new and unusual sense—so, that by applying actions, functions, and passions, to subjects, which do not seem, at first glance, to admit of them—a simile, a metaphorical allusion, or an allegory, is, in fact, conveyed in a single word.——Thus βιοτον ηγηλαζει—θρεπτηρια πεσσω—ψυχην επεδεδρομε ληθη—λευκησιν επιχνοαυσαι εθειραις—Λημνον παισιν εσανδωση—*adire labores—sic volvere parcas—ponto nox incubuit atra—oscula libavit natæ—obscuro gradientes aere sepsit—fervet opus—miseris succurere disco——in æthera purgat apertum—pleno se proluit auro—nox humida cælo præcipitat.*——But these examples must suffice, for the present—enough has been said, to show my admiration of the noble poets before us—though by no means enough to do justice to their merit.

I feel, that the present essay has swelled to a bulk, scarcely compatible with the nature of my present undertaking,

dertaking. It is time to dismiss the present subject, however agreeable, and hasten forward to the goal.

Ιλατ' αριςηων μακαρων γενος αιδε δ' αοιδαι
Εις ετος εξ ετεος γλυκυρωτεραι ειεν αειδειν
Ανθρωποις.

ESSAY

ESSAY THE SIXTH.

SOME REFLECTIONS

ON THE

GEOGRAPHY

OF

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.

As I have already observed, that the geographical system of *Apollonius* seems to be taken from the *Orphic* fables, and is altogether ideal and romantic; it may appear to be a waste of time and labour, to attempt any thing like an exposition of it: or to point out any foundations of fact, as the probable, though remote grounds of a superstructure so chimerical. It would, I believe, be the fairest way, and might come nearest the truth, were we, at once, frankly to confess, that our poet, and the *Orphic* writers, who preceded him, either did not trouble themselves with the details of geography, or meant to set them at defiance. But, as we may be able to invalidate some of the objections, which have been made to the reality of the *Argonautic* expedition; by showing how the very errors, particularly in point of geography, which run through the accounts of this transaction, may have originated, in some foundation of fact; I trust, the reader will excuse a more minute examination of this subject. *Apollonius*, as I have had frequent occasion

of

of observing, in the course of the preceding notes and dispositions, drew much of his information, from antetior writers on the subject, some of them of very high antiquity. It is probable, that, as the original *Orphic* traditions came to be handed down, from poet to poet, they were rather more and more disguised by fiction, than rectified, in point of truth, and geographical precision, and veracity. It appears, that in the work of *Herodotus*, professedly historical, compiled by a man of candour, and admirable sense, who took uncommon pains to gain authentic information, and proposed to relate nothing, which he had not accurately examined; there are, however, a number of gross mistakes, in point of geography. It is not surprising, therefore, that writers of a much earlier date, who also had the sanction of poetical license, should have been extremely deficient in their geography. It is a branch of science, of peculiar nicety and accuracy. It is very difficult, indeed, to follow the geography of any persons, who describe the relative situation of countries, without putting the description to the test, by reducing it to the trial of geometrical construction.——The details of the *Orphic* writers, (I mean the original details,) were long prior, in point of time, to *Herodotus;* and much allowance is to be made, for poetical embellishment.—For instance, the author of the *Orphic* fable had some faint knowledge of *Europe* projecting towards the west; and places the island of *Circe* beyond the sea of *Gades*, in the *Western* ocean, at the *Ligurian* coast.——*Orphei Arg.* v. 1205, 1239.——Various other errors of this kind will present themselves to the reader.

Although these things occur in poetical works, and might be considered, as the mere offspring of fancy: yet, when they come to be viewed, as in some measure affording a pledge of truth, and being connected with

an

an event of the utmost historical notoriety, which furnishes an æra in chronology, they will deserve more attention—and the manner, in which such notions came to prevail, and such circumstances came to be inserted, by general consent, in the narratives of a transaction of general celebrity, must be an object of curiosity, and interesting speculation. At any rate, as so much of the narrative of *Apollonius* consists in geographical detail, it is necessary, to the right understanding of this author, that the reader should form distinct ideas of his geography. It is not very easy to do this, because we stumble at the threshold, and are shocked at the disagreement between him, and the authentic details of modern geography. And the verbal exposition, of the relative situation of places, is unaided by the diagram of geometrical construction.

It will conduce much, to the clearness and distinctness of our ideas, if we compare the circumstances, and points of geography, introduced by *Apollonius*, with the real truth, and genuine face of the country; if we try to follow up his errors, to refer them to their probable and original sources, and endeavour to show out of what materials they were produced and grew.

I shall first give a short account of the course, by which *Apollonius* conducts his adventurers home from *Colchis*, in one connected view. After which, I shall venture to hint my conjecture, respecting the manner, in which the poet might have been led, to attribute to the *Argonauts*, a route so visionary, and different, from what the true state of the face of the countries, to which he refers, warranted; or at this day appears to warrant.

After the *Argonauts* had possessed themselves of the *Fleece*, the *Colchians*, in great numbers, prepared to pursue them.—Part of this force sailed through the *Bosporus*, and past the *Cyanean* rocks; the other division, with

with *Absyrtus* at their head, past, by the *Danube*, into the *Adriatic* sea. It appears, according to the poet's account, that the *Danube*, or *Ister*, had two embouchures in the *Euxine* sea, which were separated, and formed, by a triangular island, named *Peucè*, the vertex of which being turned to meet the stream, the base was towards the sea. These mouths were called *Arau*, or *Arecos*, and *Calon*. The latter was nearest, and most favourable and inviting. Some of the *Colchians*, therefore, pursued it, and thus overshot the *Argonauts*.—The *Argonauts*, describing one side, and the base, of the triangle, pursued the branch, called *Arax*, and saw nothing of their enemies, the *Colchians*, till they reached the outlet of the *Ister*, in the *Chronian* or *Adriatic* sea, or gulf of *Venice*, as it is generally called, where were two islands, sacred to *Diana*. Here, they found the *Colchians* waiting to intercept their passage. *Medea* and *Jason*, in this strait, destroy *Absyrtus*, and the *Colchians* are dispersed.—The *Argonauts* sail among the numerous islands, which lie on the coast of *Dalmatia*.——They obtain assistance and intelligence from the natives.——They come, at length, to *Electris*, an island at the mouths of the *Po*; and ascend that river. From thence, *Apollonius* imagines, that they past into the river *Rhone*, which, according to him, mingles its waters with the *Po*, and sends one of its branches (it must be presumed mixed with the *Po*) to the *Adriatic* or *Ionian* sea, as *Apollonius* calls it, while the other discharges itself into the *Sardinian* or *Tuscan* sea, by seven wide embouchures.—The *Rhone*, with many windings, conveys them to a number of spreading lakes, that overflowed the country peopled by the *Celtic* tribes.—Here, the *Argo* was near being lost.—After wandering some time, in the regions of the *Celtes* and *Ligurians*, they reached the sea shore, by the aid of *Juno*, somewhere in the gulf of *Genoa*, or,

as

as it is called by *Apollonius*, the *Ligustic* sea, not far from the *Hieres* islands.—From thence they proceeded, with a rapid course, after passing a multitude of *Celtic* or *Ligurian* islands, to *Ethalia*, or the isle of *Elba*; where they refreshed themselves, and steered for the *Italian* coast, and the residence of *Circe*; that, by her means, they might obtain expiation and remission, of the guilt they had incurred by the murder of *Absyrtus*. Here, they performed rites of lustration.—Afterwards, pursuing their voyage, they passed the rocks of the *Syrens*, and the *Eolian* or *Liparæ* islands.—In this part of their progress, they escaped the dangers of the *Planetæ*, or erratic rocks, and of *Scylla* and *Charybdis*, or the faro of *Messina*.——Passing by the point of *Italy*, or cape *Spartivento*, they came to the *Grecian* sea, and made *Corcyra*, or the island of *Corfou*, which lies before the entrance of the *Adriatic* gulf.—Here they find, that part of the *Colchian* armament, which, proceeding by the *Bosporus*, had past the *Cyanean* rocks.——They are protected by the king and queen of the island, and entertained with hospitality.——The *Argonauts*, after their departure from *Corcyra*, endeavoured to reach that part of *Greece*, to which they were bound; but a dreadful storm drove them on the coast of *Lybia*; where they were in danger of being lost, in the greater *Syrtis*, now called *Sydra*.—They landed in a sandy inhospitable desert, and were in still greater danger of perishing, by thirst and hunger.——Here, they were encouraged to carry their vessel over land, with united efforts.—This they performed with wonderful perseverance; and, after a long and painful march, arrived at the river and lake of *Triton*, or *Tritonis*, now called *Lowdeah*, or the lake of *Marks*.——Here they were, at first, as much perplexed as ever; not being able to discover any outlet from the lake to the sea.—From this strait they were

were guided, by supernatural assistance, to an outlet; by which, it must be supposed, that *Apollonius* meant the lesser *Syrtis*, or gulf of *Kabes*; because, in fact, this outlet communicated, and does communicate yet, with the lake *Tritonis*.—The *Argonauts* having gained the sea, sailed wide of the promontory of *Phycus*, now cape *Razat*, and arrived at *Crete*.—Having past that island, they encountered a storm among the *Sporades*. ——Having weathered this storm, they past between *Egina* and the coast of *Attica*, and so proceeded to the bay of *Fagasæ*.

The material features, which strike us, as the sins against true geography, in this narrative, are the sailing on the *Po*, the passing from the *Po* to the *Rhone*, and then the sailing on the *Rhone* to the *Ligustic* sea; their being entangled, and nearly lost, in the *Syrtis*; their carrying their vessel over land, to the lake *Tritonis*, and passing from that lake, by a narrow outlet, to the main sea.

In all this, disguised as it is with fable, there seems to be a certain groundwork of reality. I have not the least doubt, of such an expedition from *Greece* having actually taken place, whatever might have been the original motive that produced it, or the object to which it was directed.—The original accounts of it were, certainly, much tinctured with fable; and, at every remove from the first relators, its authenticity was diminished, and new embellishments, and fabulous circumstances, were added.

I proceed to lay before the reader some considerations, which may help to point out the origin of those errors, which have crept into the accounts of the *Argonautic* expedition; and explain how it happened, that these erroneous accounts should have been so generally received, and past current, instead of revolting the minds

minds of men.—For, it is remarkable, that though the different accounts of the *Argonautic* enterprise vary, in many circumstances, they all concur, in the violation of geographical truth.—In the first place, the fond admiration, which the *Greeks* attached to the *Argonautic* expedition, which was one of their favourite enterprises, disposed them to throw as much of the marvellous, as they could, into the story of it; and to receive, with a degree of partiality, the tales, which were handed down, from generation to generation, concerning the dangers and the labours of the band of heroes, who were engaged in this bold enterprise.—In the next place, we must remember, that, at the time of the *Argonautic* expedition, and even long after it, the navigation of the *Greeks* was in a very rude and imperfect state; and, though they had many vessels, they were small and inconvenient, imperfectly formed and rigged, and ill calculated, for encountering the violence of the storms and rough seas.——Though the *Greeks* made many excursions, partly commercial, partly piratical, they consumed much time, in traversing, comparatively speaking, inconsiderable spaces; and confined themselves to coasting voyages, within the *Grecian* seas, and on the coasts, of their own country, and of *Asia Minor*, *Syria*, *Palestine*, and *Egypt*.—Hence, it followed, that the ancients, at this period, were very imperfectly acquainted with the relative positions, bearings, and distances of places; and that they chiefly judged of the distance of one place from another, by the time the passage from one to the other usually required, a very fallible and uncertain criterion.—It is plain, too, that the little geographical knowledge, which could have been acquired by the voyagers and adventurers of ancient *Greece*, must have

* See preceding essay on the *Argonautic* expedition.

been

been confined to acquaintance with the ports and maritime regions; and that, as to the inland country, the pursuit of rivers to their sources, the ranges of mountains, and other particulars of that kind, their notices must have been very confused and imperfect.—It is not surprising, that, with such scanty materials, and fallacious sources of information, even the most grave and intelligent writers, of remote antiquity, should have erected very fantastic and unsubstantial systems of geography.——It is not surprising, that they should have confounded together synonimous cities, regions, rivers, and mountains, of which there were very many.—This, in itself, was an abundant source, of error, confusion, and falsification.—There was an obvious mistake, which, in the infancy of geography, and while the knowledge of the inland parts of remote countries was very imperfect, might have led the ancient *Greeks*, into many other errors: this was the considering subordinate, or tributary rivers, which fall into other rivers, and augment their streams, as parts of those rivers, to which they join their waters, and in whose currents they are absorbed.—Another mistake, somewhat analogous, was the supposing, that different rivers, which nearly approximated to each other, in their courses, actually communicated: and that rivers, which, in their courses, nearly approached the sea, actually flowed into it, in their own persons, if I may be allowed the expression.—Another error, at least, in the poetical writers, was the supposing rivers indiscriminately to be navigable.—All these causes must have produced much confusion among the ancient geographers, in their descriptions of remote countries, and rivers, with which they had not opportunities of being very accurately acquainted.

Let us now consider how these circumstances might have operated, in the first place, with respect to the

Danube.

Danube.—This river, rising in the western part of *Germany*, from the hill *Abnoba*, runs through *Bavaria*, *Austria*, *Hungary*, *Servia*, *Bulgaria*, *Moldavia*, *Bessarabia*, and parts of *Tartary*; receives about sixty different rivers, in its course, and falls, at last, into the *Black* sea. It was properly called the *Ister*, say the ancients, towards *Illyricum*.—Now, the country through which the *Danube* flows, is so intersected by a multitude of rivers, that it is by no means surprising, that ancient geographers, with the imperfect knowledge which they possessed, respecting the country, should confound the names of these rivers with each other, or suppose them to be ramifications of the capital river, which attracted the chief notice; and should thus apply to them, all that was properly true of some one only. And, again, it was natural, that, as many of the different rivers, which communicate with the *Danube*, do very nearly approach, and almost seem to meet the rivers of *Hungarian Dalmatia* and *Croatia*, which lie on the upper part of the *Adriatic* sea, and were the ancient *Liburnia*, they should be supposed, actually to join those rivers, which they thus nearly approach; and, in fact, that the rivers of this *Dalmatia* and *Croatia*, should be confounded with the *Danube*.——Now, this country abounds in rivers; and most of the rivers of this region, though their course is but short, are navigable.—From these circumstances it may have happened, that ancient geographers were led into the error of supposing, like *Apollonius Rhodius*, that the *Danube* discharged one of its branches into the *Adriatic* sea, or gulf of *Venice*, which they called the *Ionian* sea; and that the embouchures of that river, in the *Euxine*, or *Black* sea, were only the outlets of another of his arms.—If we admit a supposition of this kind, we may follow it up, with some plausibility, and pursue the course of the *Danube*, from the

the *Black* sea to *Belgrade*, where it meets the *Saave*.—This last river passes through *Morlachia*, and part of *Carniola*.——The ancients might have imagined it to be, and actually have called it, part of the *Danube*.——The *Kalpa*, or *Colapis*, joins the *Saave*, and brings this range or course of waters, with an uninterrupted communication, from the shores of the *Euxine*, near the coast of the *Adriatic* sea.—Further, the course of the *Kalpa*, or *Colapis*, is not far from the head of the wide-spreading *Unna*, which falls into the *Adriatic* sea, on the coast of *Hungarian Dalmatia*.—All this will appear plainly, if the reader will take the trouble of resorting to the map.——On a review of what has been said, the application of the principles of error, pointed out above, will appear, which may serve to account for the supposition of the ancients, that the *Danube* or *Ister* had two great branches, one of which discharged itself, by different mouths, into the *Ionian* or *Adriatic* sea.—First, the approach of a number of rivers to each other, which actually nearly continues and comprehends the communication, by water, through the whole vast extent, which separates the two seas in question: and, secondly, the confusion of names, and want of distinguishing the different waters, from each other, which had distinct appellations, must have been a fruitful source of error, where the region, to which I allude, was irrigated by such a multitude of streams.

I proceed to the second extraordinary point, in the *Orphic* or *Argonautic* geography, the source which it attributes to the *Ister*.

" A river, stately-winding, deep, and wide,
" From far far distant mountains rolls its tide,
" Where ships of burden sure protection claim,
" Long is its course, and *Ister* is its name.

" Far

" Far o'er *Riphean* hills, where *Boreas* reigns,
" He undivided flows, through various plains;
" But, when thro' *Thrace*, and *Scythian* clime, he glides,
" In two broad streams his rapid flood divides."
Fawkes.

Thus, we find *Apollonius* supposes the *Danube* to rise in the *Riphæan* mountains.—Wherever they were; it appears, that even the best informed of the *Greeks*, at a period long subsequent, indeed, to the *Argonautic* expedition, had but a very imperfect acquaintance with the course of the *Danube*, or the precise place where it springs.—This was the case, palpably, with *Herodotus*, one of their most inquisitive and judicious writers.—He says, that the *Danube* is supposed to spring from amongst the *Celtæ*; and the place of its source is said to be named *Pyrene*.—(*Euterpe*, 33.)—So that, if he knew the true position of its source, he must have meant to include the inhabitants of the west of *Europe*, generally, under the denomination of *Celtæ*.—He appears to have had a very indistinct idea, of the tract between the *Adriatic* sea and the *Danube*.—The *Eneti* (*Heneti* or *Veneti*) are by him said, to border on the *Adriatic*; and the *Sigynæ* to have extended to their neighbourhood; but the context, as it stands, appears to be contradictory; for the *Sigynæ* are said to lie beyond the *Danube*, and yet to extend almost to the *Eneti*, on the *Adriatic*.

On this part of the subject, it may be material to observe, that *Apollonius* differs considerably, from the more ancient narrators of the story of the expedition; for instance, from *Onomacritus*, who published his work, under the name of *Orpheus*; and who, most probably, only had collected and pieced together, the real venerable fragments of that early bard, hierophant, and adventurers;

venturers; as *Macpherson* did, in our own times, with respect to *Ossian*. This deviation, in the course ascribed to the navigators, and in many circumstances of the voyage, from what is pointed out, in the truly *Orphic* remains and fables, must have proceeded from the preference, which *Apollonius*, who was a man highly learned, and perfectly acquainted with all the different works on this interesting subject, gave to the narratives of later writers, as *Nymphis*, *Pherecydes*, *Herodorus*, and others. It is observable, that *Apollonius* perfectly corresponds, in the course which he attributes to the *Argonauts*, with *Apollonorus*† the *Athenian*, a writer of high antiquity and credit, who differs, however, from *Apollonius*, in one or two other particulars.—The *Orphic* accounts, on the other hand,‡ bring these adventurers into the *Palus Mæotis*, (now the sea of *Zabach*,) and thence, through a narrow and dangerous strait, on which border the *Nomades*, the *Sauromatæ*, the *Geloni*, the *Brydini*, the *Melanchleni*, the *Arimaspians*, and other *Scythian* tribes, to the *Northern* ocean, which extends to the pole, and the regions of the *Hyperboreans* and *Cimmerians*.—To hold this course, they must be supposed, to have past near the present site of *Azoph*; and to have sailed on the *Tanais*, now the *Don*.

With respect to the origin, which *Apollonius* assigns to the *Danube*, deriving it from the *Riphæan* hills; I would venture, but with much diffidence, to hazard a conjecture, that, by *Riphæan* hills, in this place, the poet really meant the vast chain—the *Carpathian* mountains.—Many rivers flow from these hills, which fall

* See *Rennell's* geography of *Herodotus*, p. 55, 56.

† See translation of an extract from *Apollodorus*.

‡ See translation of an extract from *Orpheus*.

into

into the *Danube*, and augment its course.—The *Tibiscus*, or *Tiest*—the *Tiaranthus*, or *Ott*—the *Araxes*, or *Siret*—the *Parata*, or *Pruth*.—Now, if we grant, that by the *Riphæan* hills are really meant the *Carpathian* mountains; and, that the ancients were in the habit of confounding with the *Danube* those rivers, which fall into and augment his stream; and wrote and spoke under the influence of this error, of predicating of the principal, what was true only, and descriptive, of the accessory; we may be able to explain, in a plausible manner, how these fallacious accounts came to originate, respecting the source of the *Danube*.

I proceed, now, to consider another part of the geographical statement of *Apollonius*, namely, that the *Argonauts*, from the *Ionian* sea, as he calls it, sailed up the *Po*, and thence past into the *Rhone*, which, according to him, communicates with the *Po*: that they then proceeded on the *Rhone*, which, as he asserts, has two branches, with one of which it meets the *Ionian* sea; and through the other flows into the *Ligustic* sea, or gulf of *Genoa*; in its progress inundating the country, and spreading into a number of marshy shallows and stormy lakes, dangerous, in winter, to the navigator—"Δυσχείμεροι."——That the *Argonauts* sailed on this latter part of the *Rhone*, until they came out in the *Ligustic* sea, or gulf of *Genoa*, somewhere in sight of the *Stœchades* or *Hieres* islands.—We may account for this strange narrative, on the same principles of error, which have already been stated, with respect to the *Danube*. With a reference to these principles, let us attend the progress of the *Po*, which, rising from mount *Viso*, near the valley of the *Po*, in the marquisate of *Saluces*, in *Piedmont*, takes its course, in a serpentine form, from west to east: the *Po*, after it has past the valley, from it called the valley of the *Po*, irrigates the

Montferrat, and the duchy of *Milan*, rolls between *Cremona*, and the *Parmesan*—traverses the duchy of *Mantua*—enters the states of the *Church*, and discharges itself, by a number of embouchures, into the *Adriatic* sea. That this great river passes through a country, which is eminently watered, by a multitude of streams, intersecting each other, in every direction, so that they form a perfect labyrinth of waters; is manifest, to any one, who consults the maps of that part of *Italy*.——This river, in its course, receives into its channel a great number of other considerable rivers, which, again, are augmented, as they flow, by a crowd of tributary streams.—These are the *Chiuson*, which joins the *Po*, near the valley of the *Po*—the *Orco*—the *Doria Baltea*—the *Sessia*—the *Tanaro*—the *Gogna*—the *Navilio*—the *Scrivia*—the *Tesino*—the *Olona*—the *Sambro*—the *Adda*—the *Trebbia*—the *Taro*—the *Oglio*—the *Mincio*—the *Secchia*—the *Tartaro*—the *Panaro*, *&c.*—This is a tolerably numerous list of considerable streams, all which communicate directly with the *Po*, independant of smaller streams, which he receives.—Thus, we see, what a number of streams communicate, either directly or indirectly, with the *Po*, while it is travelling from its source, to the duchy of *Ferrara*, and the *Comachio*; where it joins the *Adriatic*. This circumstance is to be coupled, with the ignorance of the ancient *Greeks*, respecting the interior of *Italy*, with which they were little, if at all, acquainted; as may be collected, from the dreadful stories, of giants, enchanters, monsters, and cannibals, which they fabricated, respecting the coasts of *Italy*, and their inhabitants. If they were thus ignorant, even of the sea-coasts of *Italy*, and related so many fables concerning it, we must conclude, that being, of course, still more ignorant of every particular, respecting the inland region, their accounts must have been

wild

wild and erroneous, when they attempted to describe them.—The confusion, which necessarily results from a similitude of names, must, also, as I have said, be taken into account.

In fact, that part of *Italy*, which stretches between the gulf of *Genoa*, and the head of the *Adriatic* sea, or gulf of *Venice*, is intersected and watered, perhaps above any other part of the known world, with rivers, which traverse it, in every direction. This, allowing for the amplifications and misrepresentations of travellers, and the disguise of names, might have supplied some sort of groundwork, for the superstructure of fabulous or erroneous geography, which we find detailed in *Apollonius*. —Our poet, also, talks of a number of marshes, and spreading lakes, whose waters are agitated by storms: this part of his account perfectly tallies, with what we know to be true, respecting the part of *Italy* of which I speak. There are a number of lakes, which stretch, in a sort of chain, through the north of *Italy*. Such are the lakes of *Bregentz*, *Lago Maggiore*, *Lago Lugano*, the lake of *Como*, *Lago di Garda*, the lake of the *Mincio*, in which *Mantua* stands.——These lakes, either actually or nearly communicate with the rivers, that join the *Po*—the *Lago di Como* itself, becomes a regular river, in the *Adda*.—From the *Lago Maggiore* flows the *Tesina*, which, together with the *Oglio*, and, as I have said, almost all the rivers of this region, loses itself in the *Po*. At the same time, the *Po* spreads into extensive marshes and shallows, in the *Comacchio*.

If we look at the shores of the gulf of *Genoa*, the country of *Nice*, the marquisate of *Final*, and the *Riviera*; we observe there a great number of rivers, falling into the sea.—Now, it is highly probable, that the ancient *Greeks*, with the very superficial, and, as I may call it, mere coast knowledge, which they had obtained,

concerning *Italy*, should suppose, in the first place, that these rivers were navigable; and, in the next place, that they communicated with the *Po*, which they had observed in a circumnavigation of *Italy*, (with them a great voyage,) to fall into the *Adriatic* sea, by a number of embouchures.—Thus, perhaps, we might account for their erroneous supposition, that a vessel could pass, by inland navigation, from the *Adriatic*, or, as they called it, *Ionian* sea, to the *Ligustic* sea, or gulf of *Genoa*.

But, the error of *Apollonius* extends yet further; and cannot be accounted for by what has hitherto been said.—Our poet relates, that "The *Argonauts* past from the "*Po* into the *Rhone*, which, as he says, forms shallows "and marshes, and stormy lakes, in the vast extended "country of the *Celtæ*.—In one of the branches of this "river, they were in danger of being lost; but, at last, "they made their way out, to the *Ligustic* sea."—Such is the strange story!—As to the *Rhone*, it rises in that part of the *Alps*, called *Mont de la Fourche*, in the eastern extremity of *Switzerland*.—It passes by *Sion*, and *St. Maurice*, after which, it enters into the lake of *Geneva*, which it traverses through its whole extent.—It, then, loses itself, for a time, in a rocky gulf.—In its course, it receives a number of considerable rivers—as the *Saône*, which joins it at *Lyons*——the *Isere*——the *Sorgue*—the *Durance*.—It falls into the sea of *Provence*, or gulf of *Lyons*, anciently part of the *Tyrrhenian* sea, about thirty leagues to the south of the city of *Arles*.—Such is the river, which *Apollonius* makes to communicate with the *Po*, and to fall into the *Adriatic* sea, with one arm; into the gulf of *Genoa*, with the other!—It would not be so strange, that the poet should confound the *Po*, with the streams, which actually fall into it; or even suppose, under the influence of such a confusion, that it flowed both into the *Ionian* and *Ligustic* seas; but,

but, that he should make the *Rhone* communicate with the *Po*, and discharge part of its waters into the gulf of *Genoa*, seems to be either a piece of very gross ignorance, or a fiction of revolting and unnecessary boldness, for which it is not easy to assign a reason.—Certainly, it is not so easy to account for this piece of geography, as for his confounding, as he does, the rivers, that join the *Danube*, with that river itself.——It may, perhaps, appear to some idle, and a waste of time, to reason upon this subject, or to attempt to explain, how the poet came to adopt such an opinion.—If he really meant to give the story, not as a poetical embellishment, but to pledge himself for the truth of what he relates.—We cannot, I think, assign any other source, for such a glaring error, than the confusion of names, arising, most probably, from a similarity of sound, which misled the first travellers and historians, from whom our poet borrowed his materials, and caused them to prædicate, concerning the *Rhone*, what was applicable to some other stream or streams, whose names, more or less, nearly approached to those of the *Rhone*, in sound.

The river *Saone*, which joins the *Rhone*, at *Lyons*, was anciently called the *Araris*.—The classical name of the *Rhone*, was the *Rhodanus*.—Now, might it not possibly have happened, that the voyagers, and travellers, in the early ages of *Greece*, by joining together the names of those two rivers, which united their currents, (a natural mistake enough,) were led, to confound the rivers in question, to consider them as one, and to form of two names one appellation, *Arar-rhodanus*, or *Arrhodanus*, which, the reader will perceive, is not very distant in sound from *Eridanus*, the ancient name of the river *Po?*—Might not this resemblance in sound, produced by an easy confusion of names, have led to a further

further mistake, in confounding the *Rhone*, and its adjuncts, with the *Po*, and its tributary streams?—I trust, that this conjecture will not appear very wild, or chimerical.——I am sure, I have seen many, which were more visionary and romantic, hazarded by many very great and respectable travellers, historians, and critics.

On the foregoing supposition, it remains to be considered, what streams might probably have been in the contemplation of *Apollonius*, when he spoke of that branch of the *Rhone*, through which, according to his account, the *Argonauts* sailed from the *Po*, to the *Tyrrhenian* sea.—On the principle we have mentioned, he might have understood, the *Tanaro*, the *Sturo*, and the *Var*, which flows into the sea near *Nice*, to have been that branch of the *Rhone*, through which, as he says, the *Argonauts* past into the *Tyrrhenian* sea.—It is reasonable, to conclude, that the narratives of the *Argonautic* expedition were not altogether fictitious, but had some little foundation, rather from report, than actual inspection, of the face of the country, in the testimony of mariners.

The sum of what has been said, respecting the passage of the *Argonauts*, from the *Ionian* to the *Ligustic* sea, amounts to this—the points, which shock probability the most, in the geography of *Apollonius*, are the direct passage, without interruption, of the *Argonauts*, from the *Adriatic* sea, to the gulf of *Genoa*, and the communication of the *Rhone* with the *Po*. As to the former point, the ancients, whom our poet followed, were misled and confounded, by the complicated tissue of rivers, which intersected the intervening country.—As to the latter, I think, it must be referred, to the confusion of names, nearly approaching each other in sound.—The latter mistake is one, to which travellers must be very liable, who are subject to collect the names

of

of places, of mountains, and rivers, very imperfectly and erroneously, through the fugacious and delusive medium of foreign pronunciation.——We find, for instance, in the accounts of *Cook's* voyages, the attempts of the people of *Otaheite*, to articulate the names of the travellers—how they called Captain *Cook*—*Tooti*, and Mr. *Banks*—*Opano*.——Any modern traveller, either *Englishman*, who visits *France*, or any other foreign country—or any foreigner, who visits *Britain*, or *Ireland*, will find a peculiar difficulty, in catching the true sound and articulation, of the proper names of persons and places; and a still greater difficulty, in imitating and returning these new and unwonted sounds; insomuch, that, even after many year's residence, foreigners are very deficient in the pronunciation of proper names, and alter them from the truth, and disfigure them strangely.——It is easy to see, that this must be an abundant source of confusion and deception, in the nomenclature of persons and places. Indeed, it will occur to one, who is conversant with the *Greek* writers, that they wholly transform foreign appellations, particularly proper names, and mold them in form and termination, to the genius of the *Greek* language. Even in *America*, a country but lately discovered, and discovered in an enlightened age, at a period, when the sciences and arts, particularly that of navigation, had attained a considerable degree of perfection, and had entered on their glorious career of progressive improvement.——Even in these new found regions, many disagreements have taken place, in the narratives of travellers; many doubts and uncertainties have occurred, respecting the boundaries of countries, and the site and courses of rivers.——Thus, for instance, we find great doubts and altercations have arisen, with regard to the confines

confines of *French* and *Portuguese Guiana*.* It appears, there were two rivers, named *Oyapock*—one to the north, the other to the south, of the equator, at nearly equal distances, and much difficulty has occurred, in determining, which was meant to constitute the boundary line.

If I were to form a conjecture, as to the particular streams, which were by the poet erroneously supposed to be a branch of the *Rhone*, and to form a communication, between the *Po* and the *Ligustic* sea; I should say, that, most probably, he meant to designate the *Tanaro*, the *Stura*, and the *Var*, which falls into the gulf of *Genoa*.—The *Stura* does not, it is true, communicate with the *Var*, neither do the rivers, which communicate with the *Danube*, actually reach the *Unna*, which falls into the *Adriatic* sea; yet, they nearly approach; and this might have been sufficient to have produced some vague opinion, or conjecture, that they actually met. We see how little is known, at this day, notwithstanding the enterprise, the ardent spirit of discovery, of modern times, concerning the interior of *Africa*; and shall we wonder, that the first navigators, in the infancy of their art, with so few means of enlightening their minds, should have circulated abundance of erroneous reports.

If we were to suppose it possible, that the *Argonauts* should have sailed up the *Danube*, and come out, in the *Adriatic* sea; and, again, sailed up the *Po*, and come out, in the gulf of *Genoa*; it is necessary, to the hypothesis of their doing this, (independant of the great doubtfulness, whether some of the rivers, on the currents of which they must have made their way, were

* So, respecting the existence of a north-west passage.

navigable

navigable then, or at any time, even for the smallest craft, (that they should have carried their vessel, a considerable space, over land, to convey it from one water to another. This, certainly, is no unusual thing in *America*, where there are a number of carrying places, which intervene in the course of navigations; and where the native *Indians* carry their canoes over land. The vessels used by the early navigators of *Greece*, though much larger than canoes, were very small; and it was usual, with those first mariners, when they encountered storms, to make to land, and draw their vessels on shore; a proof, that they must have been but light, and of small dimensions. It is certain, from all accounts, that the vessel, in which the *Argonauts* navigated, was not very large; it was barely sufficient, to contain from fifty to fifty-four persons; for such do the best accounts make the number of these adventurers. One of the *Argonautic* writers says, that *Hercules* was left behind, because he was too bulky and heavy for the *Argo*.——*Apollonius* says, that *Hercules* was placed in the centre, together with *Ancæus*, that the vessel might be properly trimmed, by their weight.——These relations combined, serve to show, that the vessel in question, must have been very small. It was also without deck or cabin; for *Orpheus*, in his *Argonautics*, relates, that the *Argonauts* hung the *Golden Fleece*, together with their shields and armour, to form a sort of enclosure, or closet, that *Medea* and *Jason* might enjoy the society of each other, in private. All this tends to show, that the idea of the *Argonauts* carrying their vessel over land, is not quite so wild, as may at first sight appear, to those who consider the *Argo*, in the light of a large ship of war.——The poet relates, that it was actually carried over land, in *Lybia*. If we suppose, that it was actually carried over land, in other places, not particularly mentioned by the poet,

as well as in *Lybia;* we may be able to reconcile the accounts of *Apollonius*, by the help of the theory already laid down, to possibility, if not to truth and probability. At least, the violation of credibility will be diminished, in the eyes of the critical reader.

Such a fiction, in downright opposition to truth, with respect to the site and direction of rivers, is not productive of any great poetical embellishment.—It does not, like those respecting the *Sirens*, the enchantments of *Medea*, the fiery bulls, or *Talus*, open a field for the display of sublime poetical imagination, or picturesque description. No possible advantage occurs, which the poet could have proposed to himself, by disfiguring, in cold blood, the geography of the *Argonautic* expedition. The reader will easily see, that he might have obtained all the praise and charms of variety, which could result from the bringing home of his heroes, by a new route, without resorting to such a violent expedient. But, supposing *Apollonius*, as a poet, should wilfully have hazarded such a bold experiment; how happens it, that other writers of the *Argonautic* story, some of them sober dealers in prose, should agree with him, in the errors of his geography?—Is it not rather to be supposed, that they were all equally misled, by the mistakes of travellers, originating in the causes I have already stated? The remaining part of the geography of *Apollonius* seems to be more reconcileable to truth, except with respect to the *Argonauts* having carried their vessel over land, for twelve days and nights together. The poet was himself so fully aware, that such a circumstance must shock probability, that he invokes the muse, to vouch for his veracity.—As to the dangers of the *Argonauts*, in the *Syrtes*, and their distresses, on the shore, from thirst and hunger; the narrative of the poet is not much removed from strict and sober truth, and fidelity of description

scription.——The reader will find considerable lights thrown on this part of our poet's narrative, by the learned and judicious work of Major *Rennell*, on the geography of *Herodotus*, from which I have made copious extracts, in the notes on that part of my author, where the subject is introduced.

The reader will find, that nothing improbable, or unusual, happened to the *Argonauts*, in this place: that they were, at first, in danger of being lost, in the shallows and quicksands of the greater *Syrtis*, now the gulf of *Sydra:*—that they landed and hauled their vessel ashore, a proceeding very common with ancient mariners:—that they carried their vessel overland (the least probable part of the story):——that they floated the *Argo*, in the lake of *Triton*, and found an outlet, which conveyed them out to sea, by a dangerous passage:—that is to say, that they past from land, by a certain river, which communicated with the lesser *Syrtis*, now called the bay or gulf of *Cabes*.—All these matters are already so fully treated, in the extracts, to which I refer, that I think it unnecessary, to add any thing on the subject, in this place.

Apollonius is so exact and faithful to truth, in most of his narratives, that it strikes us, as a very extraordinary thing, that he should deviate from it, so wantonly and widely, in points of geography. We are as much disappointed, as when we see a man of high character, for probity and truth, detected in a fraud, or falsehood.—We are unwilling to think, that he, who in all other particulars, affected something of historic fidelity, and seemed to draw his materials, from the most genuine and authentic sources, should, in this department, and this alone, launch out at once, without restraint, into the fields of fiction and romance.—We are much disposed, to think, that he worked upon materials,

terials, which had been transmitted to him; and followed the relations of early voyagers, somewhat disguised and coloured, by the love of the marvellous, and the spirit of exaggeration, incident to travellers, and other persons, in rude and early periods. Any person, who refers to the legends of Archbishop *Turpin*, which fill a large folio, and have furnished the ancient poets of chivalry with their materials; will find a memorable proof, of the spirit of disguising true history, with fiction, and the power of credulity, in rude and unlettered ages. But, it is high time, to release the reader, from a subject, on which so little can be advanced with certainty, or even very much appearance of plausibiliiy.

ESSAY THE SEVENTH.

ON

THE HESPERIDES

AND THEIR

GARDENS.

THE *Hesperides*, and their garden, are so particularly mentioned by *Apollonius*; that it may not be unpleasing to see some notices, on this curious and romantic subject, more ample and detailed, than could well be comprised, in the compass of a note. I shall not hazard any conjecture of my own. I merely throw together some striking particulars, collected in one view.

According to *Palephatus*, *Hesperus* was a rich *Milesian*, who had established himself in *Caria*, he had two daughters, called after him the *Hesperians*. These females possest numerous flocks and herds, called *Golden*, perhaps, on account of their beauty, perhaps, to intimate the rich produce derived from them. These nymphs (says the same writer) entrusted the care of their flocks, to a person named *Draco*: but *Hercules*, passing through the country, carried off both the shepherd and his flock.—*Varro*, and *Servius*, the venerable annotator of *Virgil*, have concurred, in adopting this natural and simple explication of the fable.

Other writers change the shepherd of these nymphs into a gardener, and the flocks into certain fruits, called by

by the *Greeks*, *golden apples*, whether on account of their colour, their exquisite taste, or their high reputation. This opinion had, at least, as many partisans, as the former; and was even supposed, in process of time, to be the prevailing one; especially among the moderns. So, that some have understood, by the apples of the *Hesperides*, *pomegranates*, *oranges*, and *citrons*.

Diodorus Siculus seems to waver between the two opinions, which have been mentioned, because, says he, the *Greek* word, "Μηλα," may signify indifferently, either flocks or apples. It is to be observed, that the admirable *Milton*, who, to his other excellencies, joined the possession of profound learning, seems to countenance the opinion, that these *golden apples* were really fruit.

—— "*Hesperian* fables true,
"If true, here only, and of delicious taste."

Diodorus enters into some details, respecting the history of the *Hesperides*.—According to him, "*Hesperus* "and *Atlas* were two brothers, who possessed great "riches, in the western part of *Africa*. The former had a daughter, called *Hesperia*, who gave her name to the whole country. She espoused her uncle, *Atlas*, and from this marriage sprang seven daughters, who were sometimes called *Hesperides*, from their mother and grandfather, sometimes *Atlantides*, from their father.—These ladies turned to the best account, their flocks, or their gardens, whichever they were; and drew from them large revenues. As they were not less beautiful than prudent, their fame was very generally diffused. *Busiris*, king of *Egypt*, became enamoured of them by report, and judging, naturally enough, that his own cruelty and savage manners, for he was a most ferocious tyrant, would impress an unfavourable idea, and prove

such

such obstacles to his wishes, that he could not hope to succeed in a regular courtship. He sent certain pirates, with instructions, to carry off the nymphs. These freebooters chose the time, for their attempt, when the *Hesperides* were enjoying themselves, in a garden; and executed the orders of their tyrant. It so happened, that *Hercules*, who was then on his return, from one of his expeditions, met with those pirates, and their captives, on the shore, where they had disembarked, to refresh themselves. The hero learned from those amiable virgins, the story of their adventures; he fell upon the pirates, and killed them. He set the *Hesperides* at liberty; and conducted them to their father. *Atlas* delighted to see his daughters again, and full of gratitude towards their deliverer, presented him with those flocks, or fruits, whichever they were. He also initiated his guest in the mysteries of astronomy, as a further mark of his gratitude. *Hercules*, well pleased with his reception, returned to *Greece*, with the treasures, and the knowledge, by which he had been thus doubly enriched.

Pliny embraces the opinion of those, who were disposed to attribute to these nymphs, fruits, and not flocks. And it seems, that he was disposed to place the gardens of the *Hesperides*, at *Lixa*, a city of *Mauritania*.—"An "arm of the sea (says he) winds in a serpentine man-"ner, round this city; and it is precisely this arm of "the sea, which has suggested to the poets their fic-"tion of an enormous and frightful dragon."

If one looks into the other historians, who have mentioned this subject, it will appear, that all that is incontestable, respecting the *Hesperides*, may be reduced to three or four points—that they possest some sort of wealth, for which they were indebted, partly to their own cares, partly to the bounty of nature, and goodness of the soil, which they cultivated—that they were

sisters

sisters—that their place of residence was well guarded, that *Hercules* visited them, and, in the end, possessed himself of those fruits or flocks, which constituted the chief source of their revenue, either by force, or with the consent of the owners.

We may perceive, then, how much the poets have made of a small matter, and what a romantic form they have contrived to give it.——They have changed the place, where the *Hesperides* lived, into a delicious and magnificent garden, where gold glittered on every side ——where the fruits, the leaves, the very branches of the trees, were all of this precious metal.——So *Ovid* assures us, *Metam.* Lib. IV.

" Arboreæ frondes auro radiante nitentes
" Ex auro ramos, ex auro poma ferebant."

All these riches were guarded by an horrible dragon, with an hundred heads, who filled the air, with all possible kinds of cries and hisses. He kept his eyes ever open, and fixed upon those golden apples, which charmed the eye with their beauty, and made an impression, of longing desire, on every heart, which it was impossible to resist.——It is fabled, that, when *Jupiter* married *Juno*, she brought him these precious apples, as a marriage portion.——It was with one of those apples, that the goddess of discord raised a contention among the three chief goddesses of heaven; and threw all *Olympus* into confusion. It was with three of these apples, that *Hippomenes* contrived to subdue the proud and coy *Atalanta;* and to win the adored prize in the race of love. —*Ovid, Metam.* Lib. X.

" Hinc tria forte meâ veniens decerpta ferebam
" Aurea poma manu nullique videnda nisi ipsi
" *Hippomenem* adii; docuique quis usus in illis."

While

While the poets converted these gardens of the *Hesperides*, into ravishing abodes of delight and enchantment; they represented their owners, as enchantresses. Their voices are heavenly—they soothe their toils, by concerts of celestial harmony——they love to change themselves into all sorts of figures, and astonish the eyes of the spectators, by transformations equally sudden and marvellous.

To make the *Hesperides* respectable at all points, it only remained for the poets, to mark them with the stamp of religion.—They assigned them a temple—they gave them a priestess, formidable, by the sovereign empire, which she exercised over nature.——It is this priestess, who, in person, guards the golden bough, and who feeds the dragon, the protector of the sacred precincts, with honey and poppies. Such is the description given by *Virgil*, in the fourth *Æneid*.

" *Hesperidum* templi custos, epulosque draconi,
" Quæ dabat, et *sacros servabat in arbore ramos*,
" Spargens humida mella soporiferumque papaver.—
" Hæc se carminibus promittit solvere mentes
" Quas velit, ast aliis duras immittere curas.
" Sistere aquam fluviis, et sidera vertere retro," *&c.*

Though the poets were agreed, as to the particulars, which have already been mentioned; they are divided on almost every other particular. They do not agree, as to the parentage and birth of these nymphs—as to their number—as to the genealogy of the dragon—as to the place, where the gardens of the *Hesperides* were situated—or, in fine, as to the manner, in which *Hercules* became possessed of the golden fruit.—*Hesiod*, for instance, will have it, that the *Hesperides* were the daughters of night. Perhaps, because they lived so far to the west, in which quarter night was supposed to commence.

commence.—*Cherecrates*, on the contrary, makes them the daughters of *Phorcus* and *Ceto*, two deities of the sea. This last fiction displeases us, because it is an inexplicable enigma.—Some other accounts, of the pedigree of the *Hesperides*, have been already mentioned.

As to the number of these nymphs, the most received opinions, among the poets, made it amount to three nymphs, whose names were *Ægle*, *Arethusa*, and *Hesperathusa*. To these some added a fourth—*Hespera*.—Others a fifth, named *Erytheis*; and others a sixth, called *Vesta*.——*Diodorus Siculus* makes their number amount to seven.

Some have imagined, that they could perceive, in these fables, a shadow of events and circumstances, recorded in holy writ—that the apples, or the flocks, of the *Hesperides*, are borrowed from the fruits, which were brought by *Joshua* and his companions, from the land of *Canaan*.—"And they came unto the brook of "*Eshcol*, and cut down from thence a branch, with "one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two, "on a staff, and they brought of the pomegranates "and the figs."—Others will have it, that the gardens of the *Hesperides*, the fruit, and the dragon, all refer to the fall of man. But these are, surely, the dreams of mystics.

Citizen *Dupuis*, in his memoir on the *Pelasgi*, (see *Liter. et Beaux Arts*, *Tom.* III. *p.* 86. *Trans. Inst. Nat.*) wishes to trace the origin of these fables to upper *Egypt*, or *Ethiopia*, whence he would derive the *Pelasgi*.—"The famous *Atlas*, (says he,) brother of that "*Prometheus*, who, according to the *Egyptians*, in their "sacred fable, respecting *Osiris*, was made to figure, "with *Antæus*, *Hercules*, and *Pan*, the garden of the "*Hesperides*, and the terrible dragon, the son of *Typhon*—of that *Typhon*, the brother and rival of *Osiris*, and

" and who was killed by *Orus*, in *Egypt*, offer still new " traces of the filiation, which subsisted between the " fables of *Libya* and *Mauritania*, and those of *Egypt*, " (whence they were derived to *Greece*,) respecting " both *Hercules* and *Typhon*."——After all, the fable, among the *Greeks*, of the garden of the *Hesperides*, may have had a very simple origin, and been derived merely from the fertility of the country, contiguous to the place, where these famous gardens are supposed to have been situated. The province of *Cyrenaica*, now *Kairoän* or *Kurin*, was the most elevated part in the tract of the *Nomades*, and wonderfully fertile. It contained the first *Grecian* colony, established in *Africa*. And how interesting it was, to the *Greeks*, may be seen, by the detailed history of the establishment, progress, and subjection of it, given by *Herodotus* (in *Melpomene*, 145, *et seq.*) It is not extraordinary, then, that these bowers of delight, wealth, and abundance, should have been placed, by the partial fables of sanguine imagination, in or near this happy region, which appeared to greater advantage, on account of the sterility of some adjacent tracts.

There has been some variety among writers, respecting the particular site of the gardens of the *Hesperides*. —Some place them, where the city of *Larach*, in the kingdom of *Fez*, now stands; others, at *Bernich*, a city of *Barca*, which tallies better with the fable; others take the province of *Susa*, in *Morocco*, for the island wherein the garden was seated.——*Rudbeck*, who has many wild fancies, places the fortunate islands, and the gardens of the *Hesperides*, in *Sweden;* which is not surprising, since some learned members would place the garden of *Eden* in *Siberia*.

Major *Rennell*, in his excellent work, says—" The " gardens or orchards of the *Hesperides*, and the history " belonging

" belonging to them, are too well known to be repeated " here. It is, however, satisfactory to know, that the " ancients fixed on a spot that is appropriate, since " there is, at present, a wood there, according to the " testimony of *Edrisi*: and it being near the sea, on " the one hand, and on the edge of the desert of *Barca*, " on the other, a wood could hardly have been ex- " pected, in that situation.

" *Strabo* places the lake of *Tritonis*, which, he says, " is the same with that of the *Hesperides*, and which " receives the river *Ladon*, at *Berenice*. The lake con- " tained an island, in which was a temple of *Venus*.— " *Pliny*, also, places these groves and gardens at *Bere-* " *nice*, at the end of the *Syrtis*: (Lib. V. ca. 5.) and " *Solinus* places it, in like manner.—*Strabo* is, however, " wrong, in placing the lake *Tritonis* at the greater " *Syrtis*, which ought to be at the lesser one.

" The *Tritonian* lake of *Lucan*, was also at, or near, " the gardens of the *Hesperides*; but, it may be a doubt, " whether he did not confound it with the lake *Trito-* " *nis*, at the lesser *Syrtis*.——He was a very bad geo- " grapher.

" *Bernice* is doubtless the same with the ancient *Be-* " *renice*. It appears from *Edrisi*, that there is, at pre- " sent, a wood, at four miles from the sea, in the plain " of *Bernice*, at about forty *German* miles to the south- " west of *Barca*. From his mentioning the wood, a " practice not common with him, one may conclude, " that it had something remarkable about it, or that " trees were not common on that coast.

" *Scylax* says, that the gardens or orchards of the " *Hesperides*, are situated, at 620 stadii, say fifty *Ger-* " *man* miles, from the port of *Barca*, which is, itself, " five hundred stadii, or about forty *German* miles, from " the port of *Cyrene*. This agrees precisely to *Bernice*.

" He

"He allows no more than two stadii for the length and "breadth of the garden, which formed a square. He "gives a catalogue of the trees in it, which stood so "thick, as to entwine with each other; and it is wor-"thy of remark, that the lotus was among them."—Thus far Major *Rennell*.

After all, perhaps, it may be a vain attempt, and a mere waste of labour, to endeavour to give a real definite existence, and assign a local habitation, to what may never have existed, except in the exaggeration of travellers, or the agreeable fictions of poetry; devised to illustrate the extraordinary fertility of that pastoral region. We know what extraordinary fictions were circulated, by the first travellers, who visited *America*, respecting the wealth of *Guiana* and *El Dorado*: and, it is not to be supposed, that ancient voyagers held their invention by stricter reins, than those of modern times. We may, perhaps, be nearest the truth, by supposing, with *Dupuis*, that the whole story is of *Egyptian* or *Ethiopic* origin; since, we know, that the early bards and philosophers of *Greece*, visited those regions, and imported thence their theology, and other learning.—The fable of the *Hesperides*, therefore, might have been of *Egyptian* origin, and had, originally, some mystic and allegorical meaning. It might have been equally destitute, of historical and geographical reality, with that long and circumstantial description, of the vast and fortunate island of *Atlantica*, which is given by *Plato*, as he tells us, from the writings of the *Egyptians*, (see *Critias*,) which, though extremely minute and circumstantial, is, certainly, wholly a romance, either invented, by *Plato* himself, or borrowed, as he says, from the *Egyptians*. And, undoubtedly, there seems to be some affinity between this fable, of the island *Atlantica*, of *Plato*, and those which were more generally received,

and

and popular, concerning the *Hesperides*, and their garden—their fruit and flocks.—The name of *Atlantica*, evidently, is derived from *Atlas*, who was, by all accounts, most nearly allied to the *Hesperides*. It was situated on the coast of *Lybia*, near the region assigned as the residence of the *Hesperian* nymphs; from whence it was supposed to extend, a vast way, towards the coasts of *Spain*.—It was governed by a race of kings, descended from *Atlas*—it was blessed with a transcendent degree of salubrity and fertility. In all these particulars, we find a considerable correspondence, between the fable of the poetical philosopher, and those accounts, which poets, by profession, have given us, of the *Hesperides*.

* *Plato, Ficini Lugd.* 1590, p. 561, B.

THE END.

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